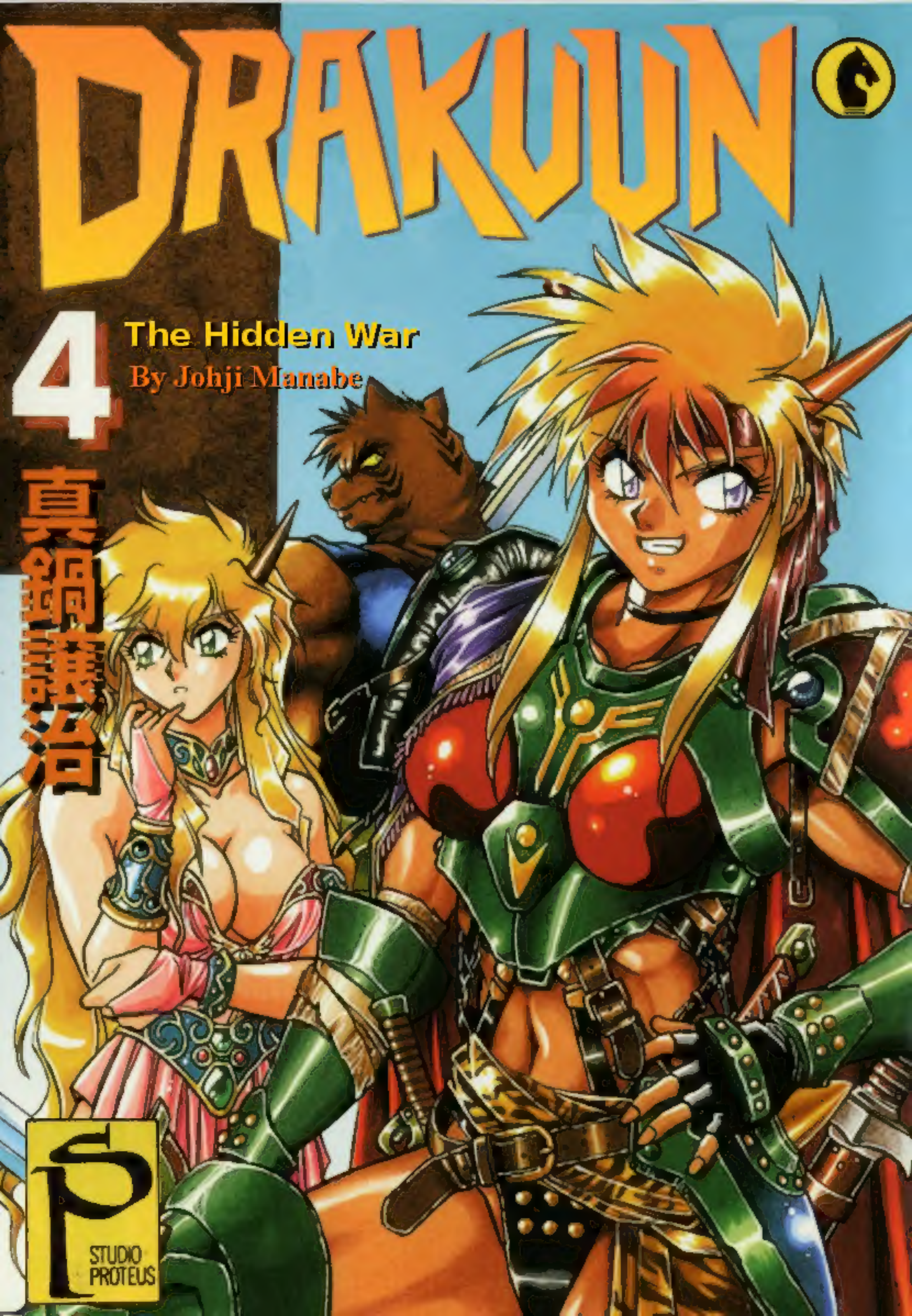
# DRAKUUN

4

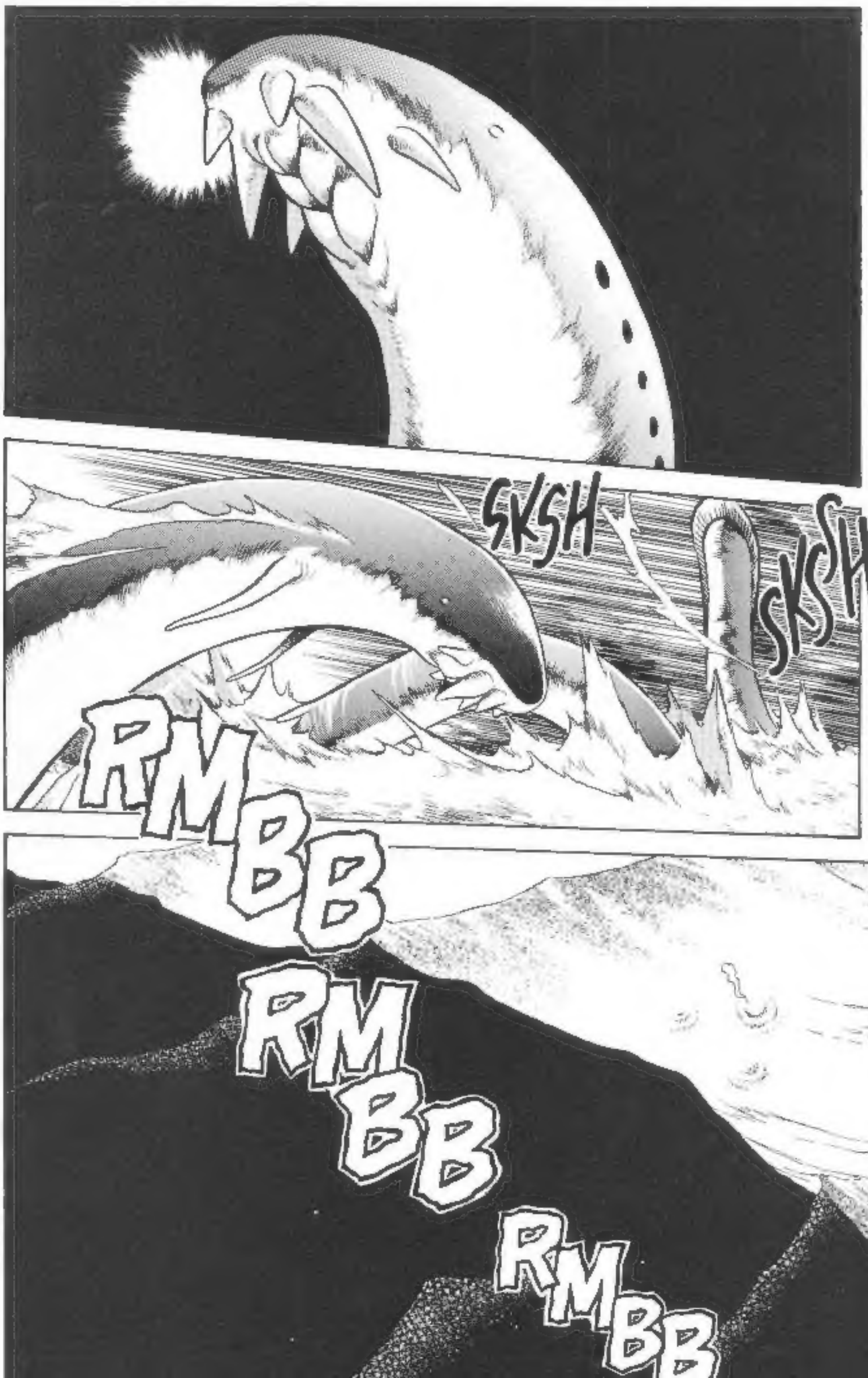
## The Hidden War

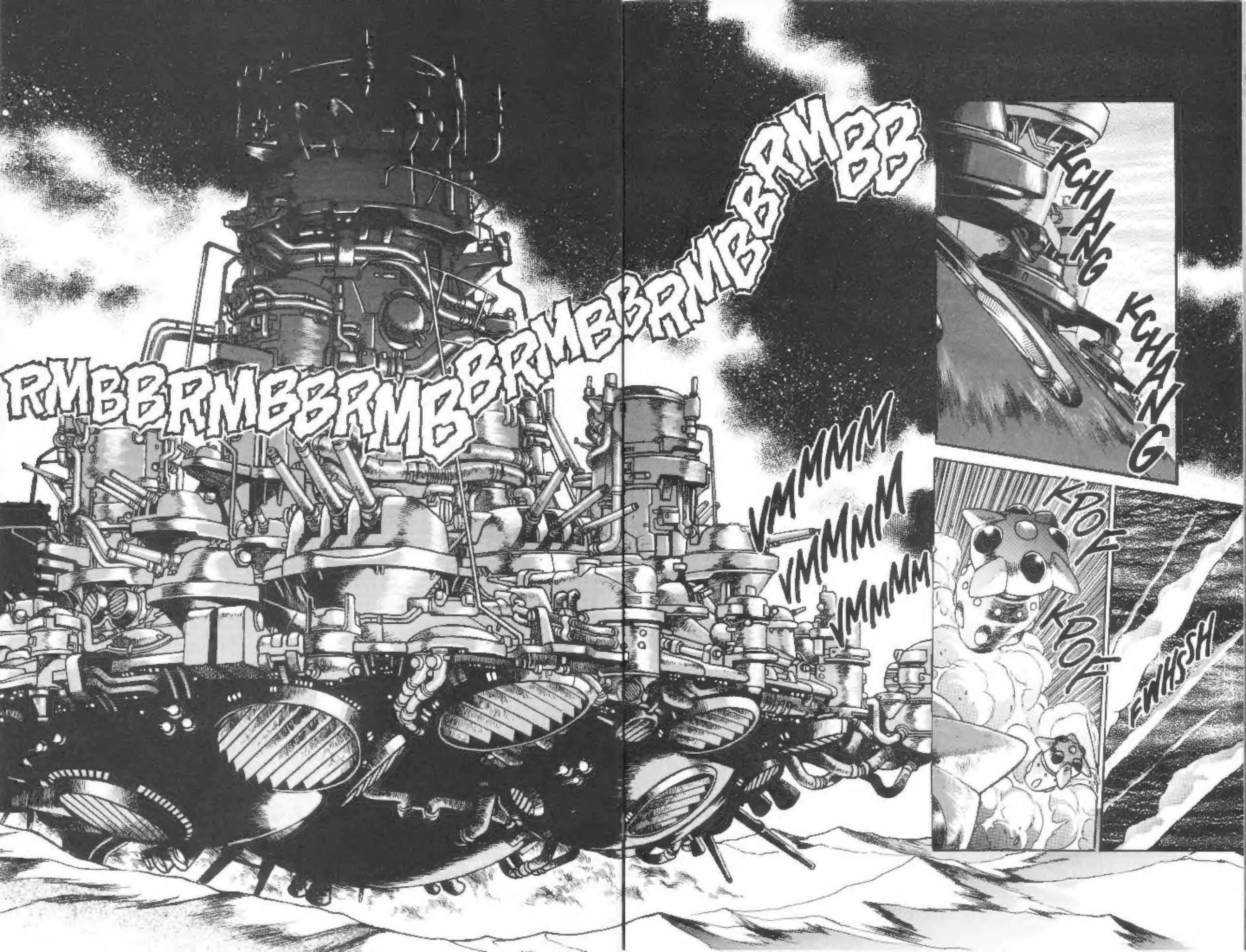
By Johji Manabe

真鍋譲治



STUDIO PROTEUS


SKSH
SKSH
RMBB
RMBB
RMBB


RMBBRMBBRMBBRMBBRMBBRMBB
VMMMMM
VMMMMM
VMMMMM
KCHANG
KCHANG
KPOF
KPOF
FWHSSH

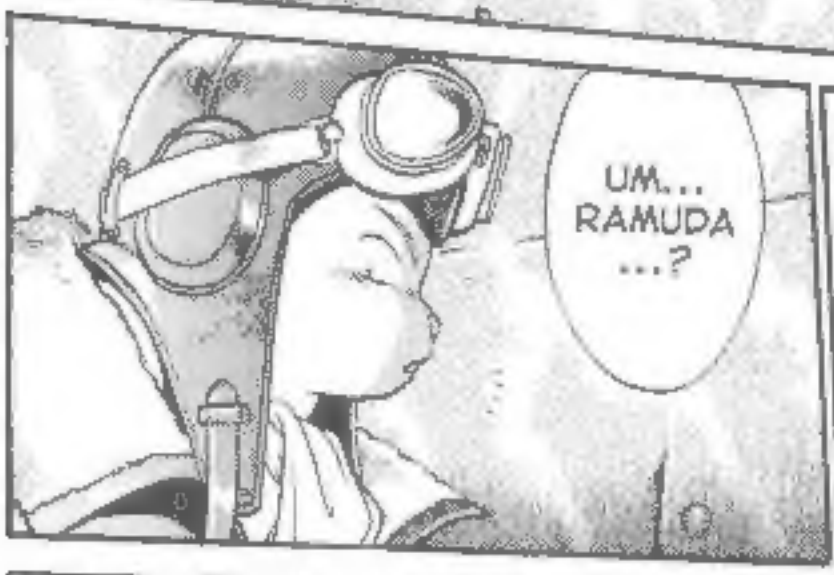
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!
HUH? WHAT?
I DUNNO... SOME-THING IN THE SKY.
SOME MORE GUYS HEADIN' FOR AKOGILAND JUST LIKE US, I BETCHA.
YEAH... THEY SAY FOLK ARE HEADIN' THERE FROM ALL OVER GRIFFEL.
YO! HOW'S THAT BEACON FROM AKOGILAND COMING IN?
NOT TOO BAD.
AS LONG AS WE CAN FOLLOW IT IN, WE'RE HOME FREE.
MY SWORD ARM'S BITCHIN' AT ME, MAN. SAYS, "HURRY UP AND LET ME SHOW THOSE DAMN IMPERIALS WHAT I CAN DO!"
THAT SCRAWNY TWIG?
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH.

WHAT WAS THAT, SCUM?!
HO! LOOKING FOR A FIGHT?!
HEY!! NO FIGHTING ONBOARD, DAMN IT!!
WHAM
FWUDD
KLIK
VREEEE

VREEEEEE
VREEEEE
KOMMANDANT ...? WE HAVE A SIGNAL.
IS IT THE AKOGILAND BEACON?
YES, SIR! I'M SURE OF IT.
THEY'RE TRANSMITTING EVERY SIX SECONDS. IT'S STRONG AND SOLID.
HMM. THAT FEEBLE SIGNAL THEY USED BEFORE WAS TOO WEAK FOR SHIPS WITHOUT HIGH-QUALITY RECEIVERS.
I THINK WE CAN ASSUME A WHOLE FLOTILLA OF SMALL CRAFT IS RIDING THE NEW BEAM.
THE FOOLS! THEY'RE PULLING OUT THE STOPS TO GET VOLUNTEERS, BUT THEY'RE ONLY DIGGING THEIR OWN GRAVE!

BEWARE, ALL YOU PIRATES WHO DARE DEFY THE EMPEROR!
I'LL TEACH YOU THE *TRUE* POWER OF ROMUNILIA!
RMBBB
VMM MM
VMM MM

AND NOT SO FAR AWAY, ANOTHER WARRIOR SETS COURSE FOR THE FIELD OF BATTLE...
VRAAA
VRAAAAAAAA
VRUPPP
BRAPPP
VREEEE
RAMUDA ...!
WHUP WHUP WHUP



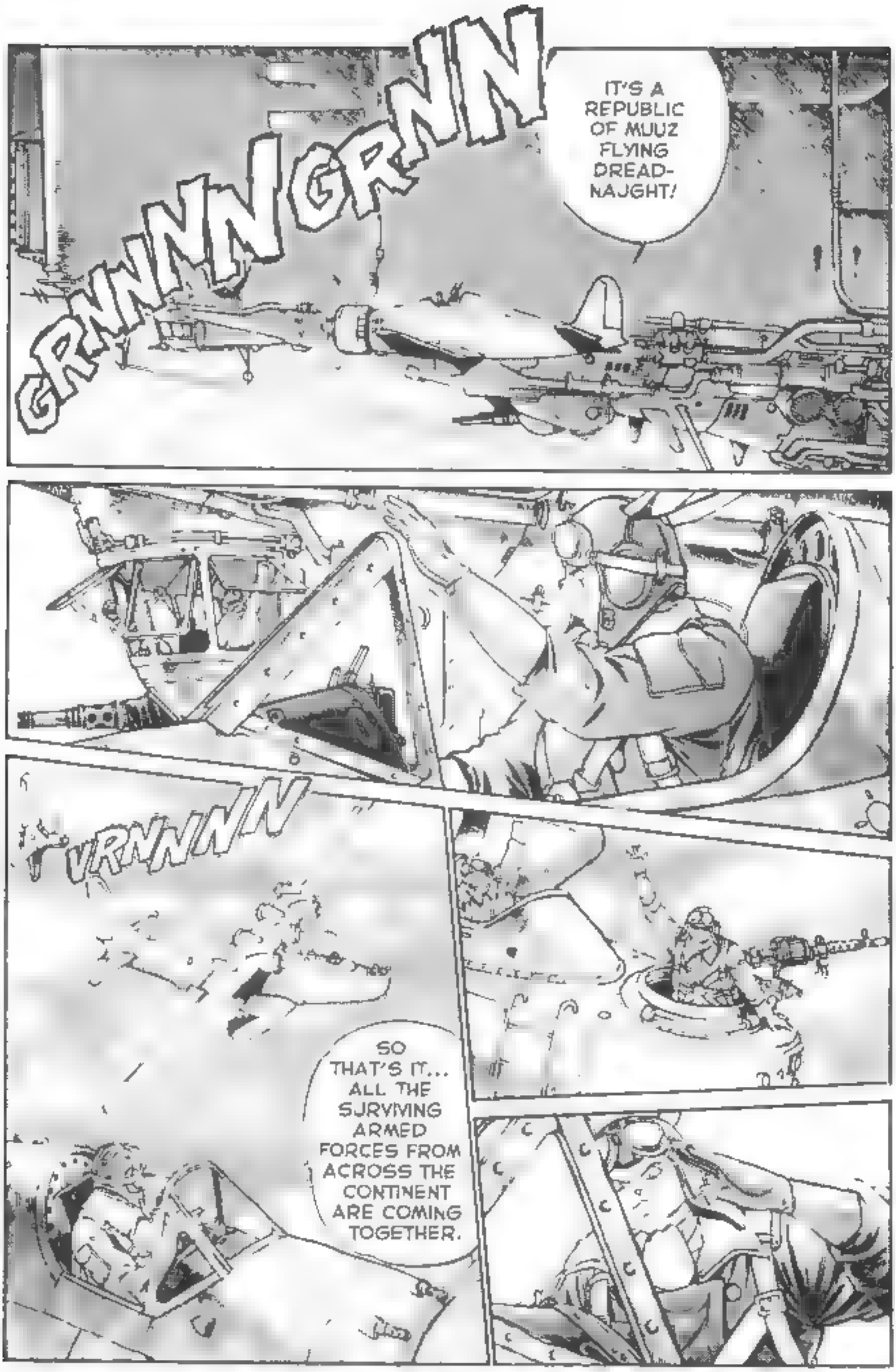
* THE KINGDOM OF FARIF'RA, ONE OF THE CORNERSTONES OF THE ANTI-IMPERIAL ALLIANCE CENTERED AROUND LEDOMIAM. IT FOUGHT ON FEROCIOUSLY AFTER LEDOMIAM WAS DESTROYED, BUT IN THE END FELL TO OVERWHELMING IMPERIAL FORCES.

GRANDPA ...?!
DON'T MAKE TROUBLE FOR THE MAJOR.
NOW... ARE YOU FEELING AS SOUND AS YOUR AIRPLANE?
YES, SIR! THANKS TO YOUR KINDNESS, WE'RE BOTH AS GOOD AS NEW.
I'VE BEEN A BURDEN ON YOU FOR FAR TOO LONG.
BOTH YOU AND YOUR FIGHTER WERE A LOT TOUGHER THAN I DREAMED.
HAH--DON'T BE FOOLED. WE'RE JUST A PAIR OF SHOT-UP HULKS. IT'S ALL I CAN DO TO KEEP US IN THE AIR!
HA, HA, HA...!
IT'S CLEAR AT ALTITUDE... NO STORMS COMING IN. YOU COULDN'T ASK FOR BETTER FLYING WEATHER.
AND I IMAGINE YOU'VE HEARD ENOUGH GOOD-BYES FROM TIRED OLD MEN...

GOD SPEED IN BATTLE, RAMUDA.
I.. I'LL P-PRAY FOR YOU
NO TEARS, ALICE.
.SO PROMISE ME YOU WON'T CRY.
I'LL COME BACK TO YOU. I PROMISE..

VRAAAAAA

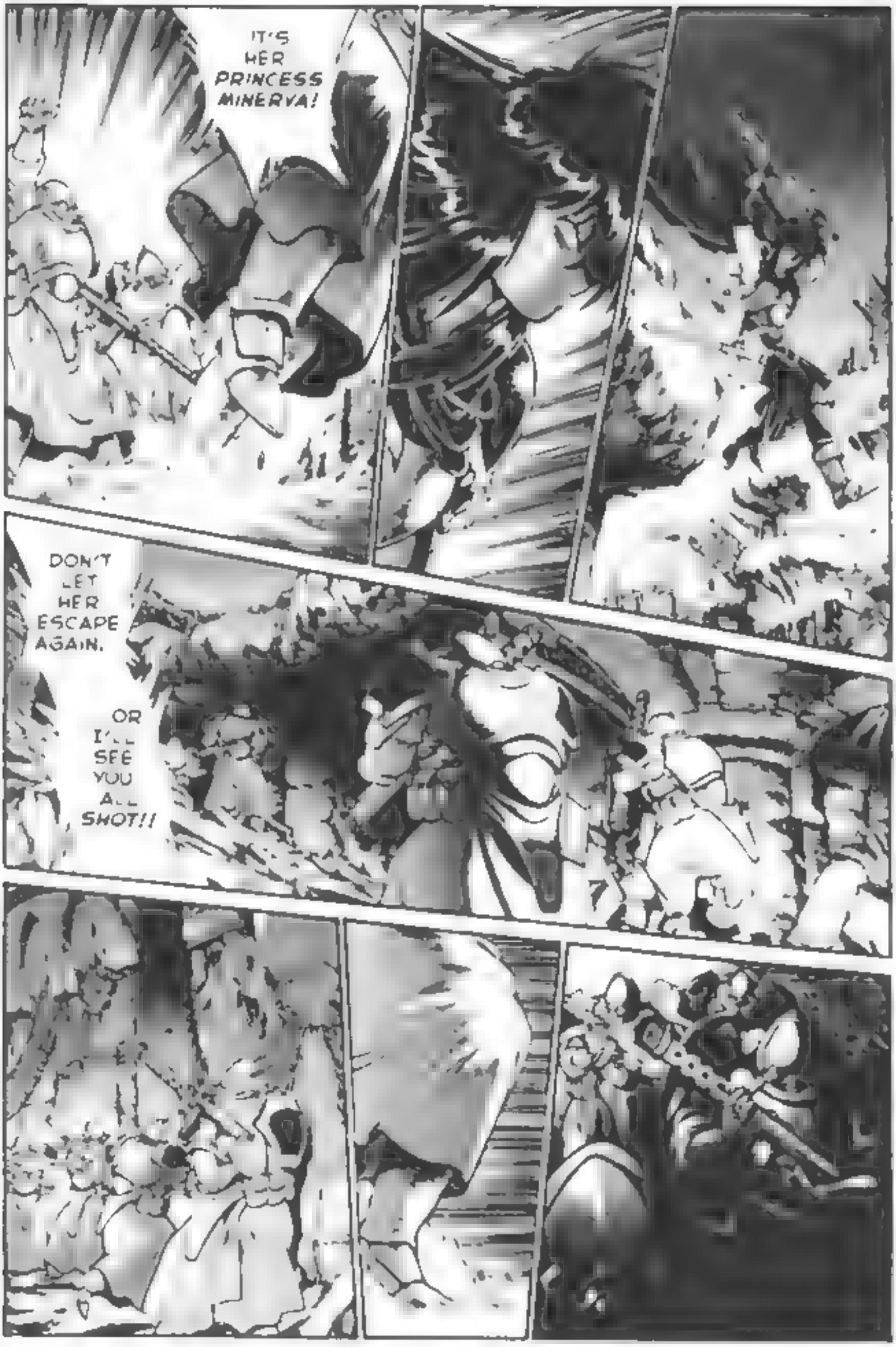
VRMMMMM
GRNNN
GRNNN
GRNNN
!!


GRNNN GRNN
IT'S A REPUBLIC OF MUUZ FLYING DREAD-NAJGHT!
VRNNNN
SO THAT'S IT... ALL THE SURVIVING ARMED FORCES FROM ACROSS THE CONTINENT ARE COMING TOGETHER.

CRAZY CONZ

KKSSHH
ERKR

NNG!
DAMN!


IT'S HER PRINCESS MINERVA!
DON'T LET HER ESCAPE AGAIN.
OR I'LL SEE YOU ALL SHOT!!

IT'S DARK DOWN THERE SO USE YOUR IRs!!
C SQUAD CIRCLE TO THE LEFT! D SQUAD TAKE THE RIGHT!
DON'T BUNCH UP!
I DON'T HAVE MAPS FOR THE BASEMENT LEVELS, SO ALL SQUADS LAY TRACKING UNITS!

WHISH
KCHOK
IT'S HER!! GET--
TOO LATE...
...YOU FOOLS!!
CHOK

WHOOR
BRIIIIIN
DIE!
DIE!!
HMPH!
PAWNS!
GK
K

VMMMMM
WHAT THE HELL ARE THOSE DAMN GRUNTS DOING DOWN THERE?!
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO CATCH ONE LOUSY BROAD, ANYWAY?!
LET'S SEE SOME GODDAMN ACTION!!
BKB AM
STOP THAT, YOU IDIOT! OUR OWN MEN ARE DOWN THERE!
WHO GIVES A SHIT! THEY'RE NO MATCH FOR MINERVA ANYWAY!
YAHOO!!
BKBOMBKBOM

WHAM
AAHGH!
WH-WHAT THE HELL?!
GOD-DAMN STUPID PILOTS!
AAAAAAAAAE!

HAW HAW HAW! BET WE DEEP FR ED THE OCTOPUS LADY AND ANYTHING ELSE DOWN THERE.
NO WAY I'M WORK NG OVERTIME AT THESE LOUSY WAGES.
INCOMING!!
BREAK LEFT! BREAK--
HEY .. WAIT A SEC. THERE'S SOME-THING..
FUM

=uhhh=
=hff=
DAMN... THEY JUST KEEP ON COMING
STILL, WHAT A JOKE, EH? MINERVA, ONCE PR NCESS OF ALL SHE SURVEYED... NOW HIDING LIKE A RAT IN THE SEWER.
SLUGH

uh oh
WHOK
GIGIK
SPLORT
EEK! EEK! YEEK!
GUH-ROSSSS!!
YUCK! GET OFF! YECCH! EEK!
SPLSH SPLSH SPLSH
KRAK

WELL, SHIT! IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT! FORGET THE TRACKERS, HE SAYS. AND NOW WE'RE FRIGGIN' LOST!
STUFF A SOCK IN IT! YOU WERE LEADING!
HEY.. WHA--
KBLOSH
OOF...
WELL, LOOKY LOOKY HERE!

SPLASH
TIE HER UP! ≥oof≤ COME ON!
I'D RATHER DIE, YOU COWARDS!
NO CAN DO. WE GOT STRICT ORDERS-- "BRING HER IN ALIVE."
STRAIGHT FROM EMPEROR KURGH HIMSELF.
"EMPEROR" KURGH ...?! YOU BASTARDS!
YOU PLEDGED YOUR ALLEGIANCE TO MY FATHER GUSTAV!!
AND NOW YOU FOLLOW KURGH?!
WE DON'T GIVE A DAMN WHO THE EMPEROR IS!
WE JUST FOLLOW THE MEANEST MOTHER AROUND!
ON YOUR FEET!

TO BE CONTINUED!!

SSHHH

YO!

WHAT'S WRONG, KREITAS? YOU SHOULD BE OVERJOYED TO HAVE YOUR PRINCESS BACK.
INSTEAD YOU'RE DOWN HERE, MOPING LIKE A GIRL. IT'S *PATHETIC.*

I'M OKAY. JUST PLEASE...
...LEAVE ME ALONE, OKAY?

YOU *STILL* WORRIED ABOUT THAT?
I TOLD YOU, BOY-- SHE WAS ALL HYPED UP WHEN SHE SAID THAT.

YEAH, I KNOW, BUT...
...BUT IT STILL CUTS ME TO THE QUICK.
*YOU TRAITOR!!*

YOUR BROTHER KRAISIS SOLD ME OUT TO KURGH!
IS THAT HOW YOU RETURN THE TRUST MY FATHER AND I PLACED IN YOU?!
VANISH FROM MY SIGHT! NEVER COME BEFORE ME AGAIN!!
IF EVER I SEE YOU AGAIN, I WILL DESTROY YOU!
B-BUT... PRINCESS ...!
BE GONE! I LOATHE THE VERY SIGHT OF YOUR FACE!!
HMM.. YEAH, WELL, COME TO THINK OF IT... THAT WOULD PROBABLY GET ME DOWN, TOO.
NO, NO... YOU'RE RIGHT.
AT LEAST MY HIGHNESS IS SAFE AND UNHARMED! CAN THERE BE GREATER JOY THAN THIS?!
YEAH, WELL, IF YOU SAY SO.

EEEEK!
BEL'IL ...?!
IT'S LADY MINERVA! SHE'S COLLAPSED IN THE SHOWER ROOM!
WHAT?! ARE YOU SURE?
WHAM
AAAAH!
PRINCESS!

PR NCESS! LADY MINERVA! SPEAK TO ME!!

RUFUS! GIVE ME A HAND!

AND STOP OGLING HER, YOU CUR!!

PRINCESS!! HANG IN THERE!! I--

ZZZZZ

....
....

ZZZZZ

UNA

HAW HAW! THIS IS RICH! SHE REALLY HAD YOU GOING!

H-HOW DARE YOU LAUGH AT ME!!

HOW EXHALSTED SHE MUST BE! SAFE AT LAST, HER POOR, FRAYED SPIRIT LETS DOWN ITS GUARD... OH, SWEET, TENDER CREATURE...

IS THIS THE BEST YOU CAN DO? HAVE YOU NO DECENT BED FOR HER?!

GET A GRIP, BOY. THIS IS A BEAT UP OLD WARSHIP... IT'S NOT DESIGNED TO BE A ROYAL YACHT.

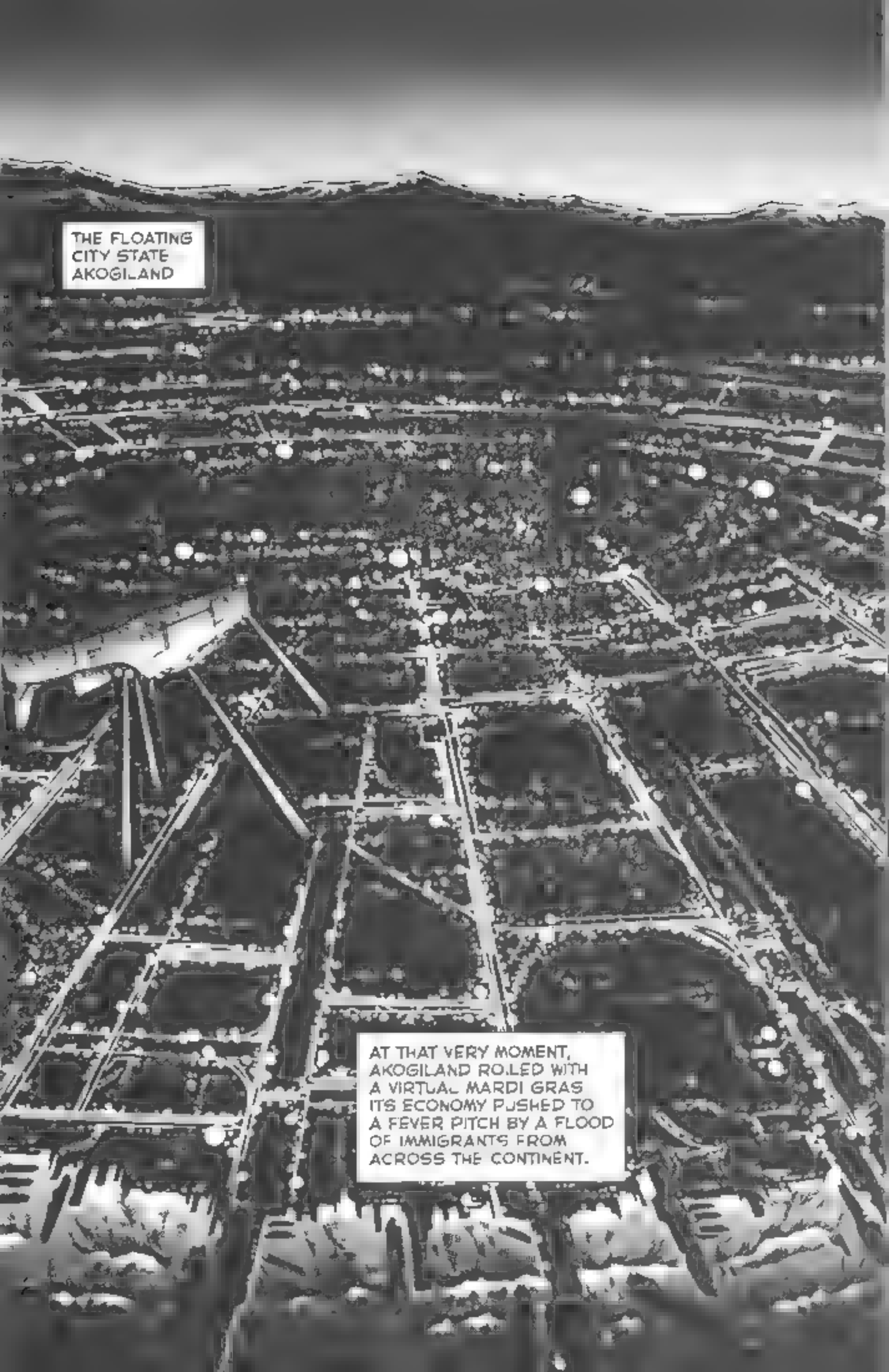
OR MAYBE SHE'S BETTER OFF IN YOUR ARMS, EH? WARM HER WITH HER STRONG YOUNG BODY ..?

WHA-?!

HEH HEH HEH! I CAN SEE WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, YOU BAD BOY, YOU!

S-SILENCE!! YOU'RE DISTURBING HER MAJESTY'S REST!

GET OUT!


THE FLOATING CITY STATE AKOGILAND
AT THAT VERY MOMENT, AKOGILAND ROLLED WITH A VIRTUAL MARDI GRAS ITS ECONOMY PUSHED TO A FEVER PITCH BY A FLOOD OF IMMIGRANTS FROM ACROSS THE CONTINENT.

COME ONE COME ALL! PEOPLE, PEOPLE AND MORE PEOPLE, POURING FROM EVERY ARRIVING SHIP... EVERY RACE, EVERY TRIBE, WELCOME, WELCOME TO ALL!

FROM RAGS TO RICHES, THE HUMBLEST PEASANT WHO WOULD BE KING! CURIOSITY... LIBERATION! THE BILE OF HATE AND ENVY...

MERCENARY VOLUNTEERS.

EXILES.

FROM MERCHANTS OF DEATH TO DEALERS IN DRUGS...

AND FROM EVERY LAND, LADIES OF THE NIGHT EAGER TO SELL THEIR FAVORS!

AND SO...

WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT, HMM?

YAHOO!

WHAMM

STOMP 'IM! KILL 'IM!!

....

KRASH

EEEK!

SO, YOU WANNA HIT NI'CHEN'S PLACE AGAIN...?

BLUP BLUP

HEH. . HIS GIRLS ARE SOMETHING ELSE.
PASSIONATE AND HOT BLOODED... OH, YEAH!
HERE--MY VERY OWN SPEC AL PARAMATT TEA... CHOCK FULL OF AKOBA!
HOW IS IT?
BACK HOME WE DRINK THIS BREW BEFORE A NIGHT OF FUN IN THE SACK.
GIVES YA THE JUICE FOR A TRIPLE PLAY, YOU BET!
YOU'RE CRAZY, YOU KNOW.
NO, NO!! IT'S AKOBA! THE AKOBA DOES IT.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN!
I'M TALKIN' ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOIN' HERE! PULLING IN EVERY DAMN MERC ON THE PLANET!
LOOK--THIS TIME WE'RE UP AGAINST REGULARS, DAMMIT! IMPERIAL REGULARS, NOT THEIR LACKEYS!
YOU'RE THE HEAD HONCHO, RIGHT?! IF YOU DON'T GOT A PLAN, MAN, YOU'RE GONNA BLOW THIS PRICELESS--
BAZZ, BAZZ, BAZZ..
IT DOESN'T DO A MAN GOOD TO BROOD.

DAMN... HOW THE HELL ARE WE GONNA BRING DOWN ROMJNILIA LIKE THIS, EH?!

RIGHT, DARD? HUH?!

THE GUY'S A FREAKIN' SHOPKEEPER, MAN. HE DON'T KNOW SHIT ABOUT *WAR*.

HIM LEADING THE TROOPS?! NO WAY!

DON'T GET SO HOT UNDER THE COLLAR, BAZZ. I'M SURE THE CHAIRMAN'S GOT SOME KINDA PLAN...

A PLAN?!

BULLSHIT! HE DON'T GOT AN IDEA IN HIS HEAD!

LOOK, DARD... WHY DON'T YOU OR KARLLA TAKE OVER THIS DUMP?
THESE DAYS IT'S *BATTLE EXPERIENCE* THAT COUNTS!

HAH! DON'T TALK LIKE AN IDIOT. I COULDN'T EVEN GET A HUNDRED GUYS TO FOLLOW ME.

THINK IT THROUGH, BAZZ. AKOGILAND WOULDN'T BE WHAT IT IS TODAY WITHOUT THE CHAIRMAN.
YOU CAN'T RUN A PLACE LIKE THIS WITH YOUR FISTS. HELL, YOU GOT TENS OF THOUSANDS OF FOLK UP HERE.

AND I'M TELLING YOU--THAT CHAIRMAN IS ONE SHARP MOTHER. I'LL BETCHA HE'S GOT A WHOLE SCENARIO FOR LAYING THE EMPIRE FLAT, ALL TICKING AWAY IN THAT HEAD OF HIS. HE'S JUST NOT LETTING IT GET HIM DOWN.

I WONDER... WELL, IF YOU SAY SO, THEN I GUESS IT'S TRUE. BUT STILL...

WAIT AND SEE, MY FRIEND. WAIT AND SEE.

BY THE WAY, HOW'S YOU-KNOW-WHO...?

AH... YOU MEAN KARULA?

HELL... WE HAD ANOTHER GO-AROUND ..

"NOT OVER THAT SWORD AGAIN .. ?"

=Sigh=
WHATCHER MOPING ABOUT, SWEET THANG?!
EEK ...?!
HEH HEH HEH...
GEEZ, DARD! YOU SCARED ME HALF TO DEATH!
YOU LET YOUR GUARD DOWN WHEN YOU THINK TOO MUCH.
EEK! STOP IT! LEGGO, DARN YOU!
UM... DARD? I'VE BEEN THINKING...
ABOUT THE SWORD.. RIGHT?
OKAY, THEN. KEEP IT.

HUH?! REALLY?!
JUST PROMISE ME ONE THING!

WHAT?
DON'T YOU EVER, EVER DRAW IT EXCEPT WHEN YOU'RE FIGHTING KURGH!

I DON'T CARE IF IT'S MAGIC POWER CRAP OR WHAT, GIRL... THERE'S NO REASON TO SHORTEN YOUR LIFE.
NORMAL TIMES, YOU USE A NORMAL BLADE, OKAY?
OKAY, OKAY, OH WISE ONE.

BESIDES, I GOT MISTER MACHO HERE TO KEEP ME SAFE!
YEAH. AS LONG AS YOU'RE WHERE I CAN SEE YOU, GIRL

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT, YOU--
OOF!

S-SORRY!
...

SHEESH-- NOT A WORD... AND I APOLO-GIZED!
WHAT A CREEP!
HEY .. ?
OH, LOOK! IT'S HIS GIRLFRIEND!
HEY! STOP THAT! DON'T PAW THROUGH PEOPLE'S STUFF!
HE'S GONE BUMMER. I MEAN, LIKE, THIS MUST BE IMPORTANT TO HIM, RIGHT?
HOLD ON TO IT WE'LL PROBABLY CROSS PATHS AGAIN.
GRNGRN

REST ASSURED...

GRNNNN GRNNN

...IT'S IN CAPABLE HANDS.

AFTER ALL, PRIME MINISTER BARBARROS...

...THAT'S WHAT WE OF THE ORDER OF AH'GASS DO BEST.

PLEASE CONVEY OUR BEST WISHES TO THE EMPEROR.

FREEK

WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU.

HMPH!

I DON'T LIKE IT!

IS THAT SO, CAPTAIN YAFKOB?

IT'S AN *OUTRAGE!* TO THINK THAT THE EMPIRE'S FINEST WARSHIP, THE *BALZAC* HERSELF, SHOULD SPEND HER FIRST MISSION SEARCHING FOR SOME. . SOME CONFOUNDE GIRL!

*HACCH!* IT PISSES ME OFF!

HEH, HEH, HEH.

TROUBLE YOURSELF NO FURTHER, CAPTAIN. ALL YOU NEED DO IS TRANSPORT US TO OUR DESTINATION.

ALTHOUGH OF COURSE, THIS "CONFOUNDED GIRL" YOU SPEAK OF, SHOULD SHE BEND HER MIND TO IT, COULD VAPORIZE YOUR LITTLE SHIP IN SECONDS.

YOU ARROGANT BASTARD! I DON'T CARE IF YOU ARE IMPERIAL COURT TECHNOS! HOW *DARE* YOU INSULT ME?!

HEH, HEH . WE MEAN NO INSULT.

WE MERELY ACT .. ON THE DIRECT ORDERS OF THE EMPEROR.

AND THIS YOUNG WOMAN IS OUR EMPEROR'S CHOSEN CONSORT.

IT WOULD BE MOST UNFORTUNATE IF YOU PROVED... *UNSATISFACTORY...* IN YOUR COOPERATION.

I TRUST YOU UNDERSTAND .. ?

.... ...!

wheeze
gasp
ARGH .. DURN... AIN'T NO GOOD...
CAN'T MOVE THESE LEGS NO MORE
YEESH! GET UP OFFA YOUR ASS! YOU FLAKE OUT AND WE AIN'T NEVER GETTIN' OUT OF THIS DESERT!
YA USELESS NERK! WHOSE FAULT IS IT WE'RE IN THIS MESS, EH?!
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TA MEAN, HUH?! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAYS "DO IT, DO IT!"
GIMME A BREAK! IT'S 'CAUSE YOU NEVER THINK NOTHIN' THROUGH!
DUMB ASS!
AN INSULT!!
DARE YA TO SAY THAT AGAIN!
I'LL SAY IT A HUNNERD TIMES! DUMBASS DUMBASS DUMBASS DUMB--!
FWHUMP
DAMN, I MISS AKOGI-LAND...
GIVE IT UP, MAN... WE SOLD OUT OUR OWN PEOPLE WE CAN'T NEVER GO BACK
THEY'D LYNCH US!

AAAAH!
UH?
WHOA ...?!
WHAT WAS THAT?!
OOH OH YES!
WELL, IF YOU ASK ME... IT SOUNDS LIKE A LADY WHEN SHE'S... ER, Y'KNOW...
MMM!
OH, MAN! NOW WE'VE STARTED HALLUCINATIN'! WE'RE GONERS FOR SURE!
NAY, NAY, GOOD FRIEND! IF WE'RE DOOMED TO DEATH, ISN'T THIS THE WAY TO GO?
SAY. I'M THINKIN' MAYBE WE KIN SEE US SOME HALLUCINATIONS, TOO ..?!
VERILY LET US TRY IT, LET US TRY!
...
....

OH, RUA THAT'S MM'

SO GOOD'

AAAAH!

OOOH!

AHN!

MMM. . RUA YOU'RE SO SO GOOD

YEP.. WE IS DEAD AND GONE TA HEAVEN FOR SURE, OLD BUDDY!

IS THEY *ANGELS?!* IS THEY *GODDESSES?!* HURRY AND GIVE A PEEK, BOBO'

AND NOW... YOUR TURN, RJA...!
AAHN!
OH... OH!!
OH, ROSALIA!!
WE GOTTA GET US A BETTER LOOK...
OW! DAMN... KINDA HARD TO CRAWL ALONG ON MY BELLY, NOW...
YAIEE!
WHO ...?!
KRNCCH!

YOU BAD MEN!!

YAEEI!

WHO ARE YOU SCUM?! AGENTS OF THE EMPIRE...?!

YEEEK! WE AIN'T NUTHIN' SUSPICIOUS OR NOTHIN', MA'AM. JUST PASSING TRAVELERS, WE IS!

MORE LIKE PASSING *PEEPING TOMS!*

NOW, THEN, MA'AM, I SWEAR. . . grrk!

ALL RIGHT, ARGJS. YOU CAN PUT THEM DOWN.

DID YOU FIND ANYTHING TO EAT?
YES, MY LADY. ARGUS FIND THREE YUMMY SAND-WORMS.
SEE?
THAT'S NO GOOD! THEY'RE PACKED FULL OF SAND--WE CAN'T EAT THAT!
YOU CAN'T? BUT THIS SAND SO SWEET... IT MELT ON TONGUE...
MAYBE ON YOUR TONGUE, ARGUS, BUT NOT OURS!
YOU STOP!
YES, SIR! WE WASN'T GOIN' NOWHERE, SIR!!
YOU BAD MEN--YOU FIND NICE PRINCESS LADY SOME GOOD FOOD! YOU GO FIND NOW!!
B-B-BUT... WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A DESERT...
FIND FOOD OR BE FOOD!!
YESS R! NO PROBLEM, SIR!!

SLLLLLLL
SIZZLE POP
I'M SO SORRY ABOUT OUR LITTLE... MISUNDERSTANDING.
YOU MUST BE SO HUNGRY. PLEASE, JOIN IN!
YAHOO! REALLY, MA'AM?! THANK'EE, THANK'EE!
YOU IS TRULY A GODDESS COME TO EARTH!
YEAH! YOU SURE ARE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OTHER HORN-SPROUTIN' VIXEN WE MET, THAT YOU ARE!
"HORN"
YOU BETCHA! THAT ONE'S A STONE CRAZY BIMBO!
SWEARS LIKE A SERGEANT, SWATS YA LIKE A WRESTLER, MORE GIRL THAN ANYBODY KIN HANDLE, I TELL YA, MA'AM!

SHE GOT A PRICE ON HER HEAD, TOO, DON'T SHE?! RIGHT NOW I HEAR SHE'S THROWIN' HER WEIGHT AROUND AKOGILAND...

...CLAIMIN' SHE'S A *PRINCESS* OR SOME KINDA THING LIKE THAT!

*TELL ME!* WHAT EXACTLY DID SHE LOOK LIKE, THIS GIRL? AND HER NAME-- DID YOU HEAR HER *NAME?!*

HER N-NAME ..?

NO... BUT LIKE, HER HAIR'S DISHWATER BLONDE... BLUE EYES, BUFFED... EIGHTEEN, MAYBE NINETEEN YEARS OLD...? SAME KINDA HORNS AS YOU...

...BUT SHE AIN'T LIKE YOU AT *ALL*, MA'AM. THAT'S ONE CRUDE BABE-- AIN'T GOT YER BREEDIN', NO SIR!

WAS HER NAME KARULA...?

*KARULA OLZEN?!*

YEAH! THAT'S IT FER SURE

HUH ..? YOU KNOW HER, MA'AM?

OF COURSE! SHE'S MY *BABY SISTER!*

*YAAEEE!*

*MERCY! MERCY!!* PLEASE DON'T KILL US, MA'AM!

TO BE CONTINUED!!

'MORNING, MA'AM!
'MORNING, M.SSY! HARD AT IT SO EARLY
YOW!

IT'S BOTH GOOD AND BAD, NOT FIGHTING ALL THE TIME
GOT TO KEEP THIS BODY IN SHAPE
THERE GOES THE MORNING FREIGHT
OKAY, CHEN- THAT'S IT FOR TODAY!

AHHH...

BY DAMN... *NOTHIN'* WAKES YA UP LIKE A HOT BATH IN THE MORNING.
A LITTLE BIT O' PARADISE!

*HEY!* YOU BETTER LET ME HAVE T BEFORE THE WATER GETS COLD, DARD!
YO... THE MUSCLE BABE'S BACK!

"MUSCLE BABE" ..? THAT SOME KIND OF *INSULT?*

KBOOSH
GLORB!

SO... YOU GOT ANY MORE SMARTASS COMMENTS AFTER GETTING AN EYEFUL OF *THIS?!*

HEE HEE! KARLLA'S *ORGANIC BODY BRUSH!*

HEY! CUT IT OUT!

*MASAHIKO!* MORE HOT WATER! AND MAKE IT SNAPPY!

DON'T WASTE YER TIME... THE KID TOOK HIMSELF OFF TO THE PORT FIRST THING THIS MORNING.

OH, YEAH-- A LOT OF SHIPS CAME IN LAST NIGHT, DIDN'T THEY?

GUESS HE'S A FLYBOY AFTER ALL, HUH?

SO . WANT TO Y'KNOW... FEEL *REAL* GOOD?

N-NAW... NOT FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.

OOH, I'VE HEARD *THAT* BEFORE...

YOU L KE IT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY, SO DON'T GIVE ME THAT NONSENSE, MY DEAR

G MME A BREAK...

OH, YEAH? CHECK IT OUT- TH S GUY *NEVER LIES!*

SCHWING

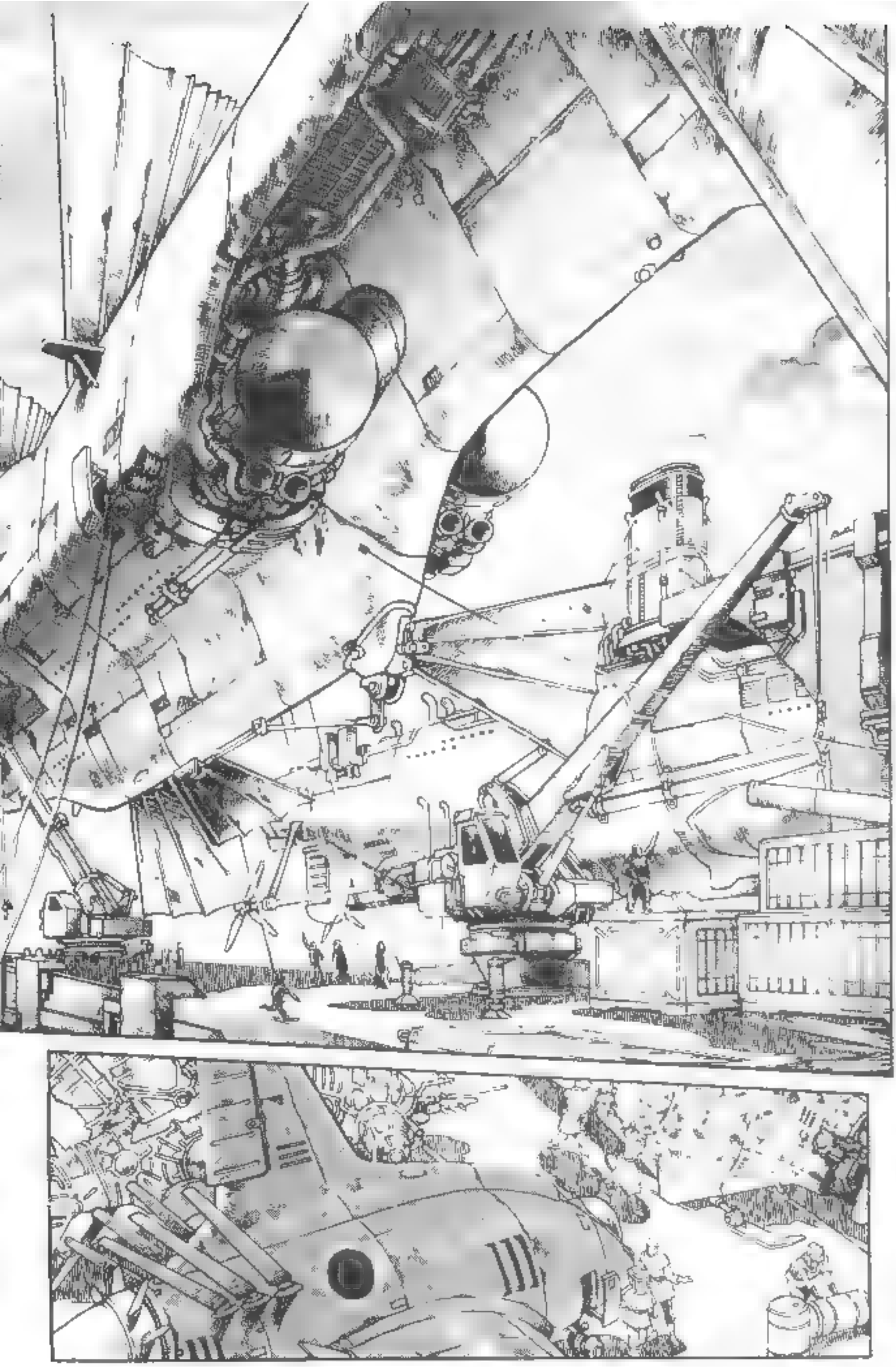
*HANDS OFF!*

AW, C'MON, BABE... YOU KNOW I LIKE IT FOR CAPPING A NICE WORKOUT. .

LH-OH!!

I'LL DO SOMETHING *EXTRA SPECIAL* NICE FOR YOU...

OOOH!
hahh
hahh
hahh
SPLSH
SPLSH
OH, BABY... MMM. MM, YEAH!!
SAY, YOU GUYS GONNA FINISH YOUR "BATH" ANY TIME SOON? I'M KINDA SWEATY, HERE...
OOPS... SORRY



YEEAHOO!!!
AWESOME! INCREDIBLE! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
CHECK IT OUT! ALL OF GRIFFEL'S MOST FAMOUS WARPLANES... IN ONE PLACE!

AAH, THERE'S NOTH NG LIKE FIGHTERS! THEY MAKE MY MANLY BLOOD *POUND IN MY VEINS!*

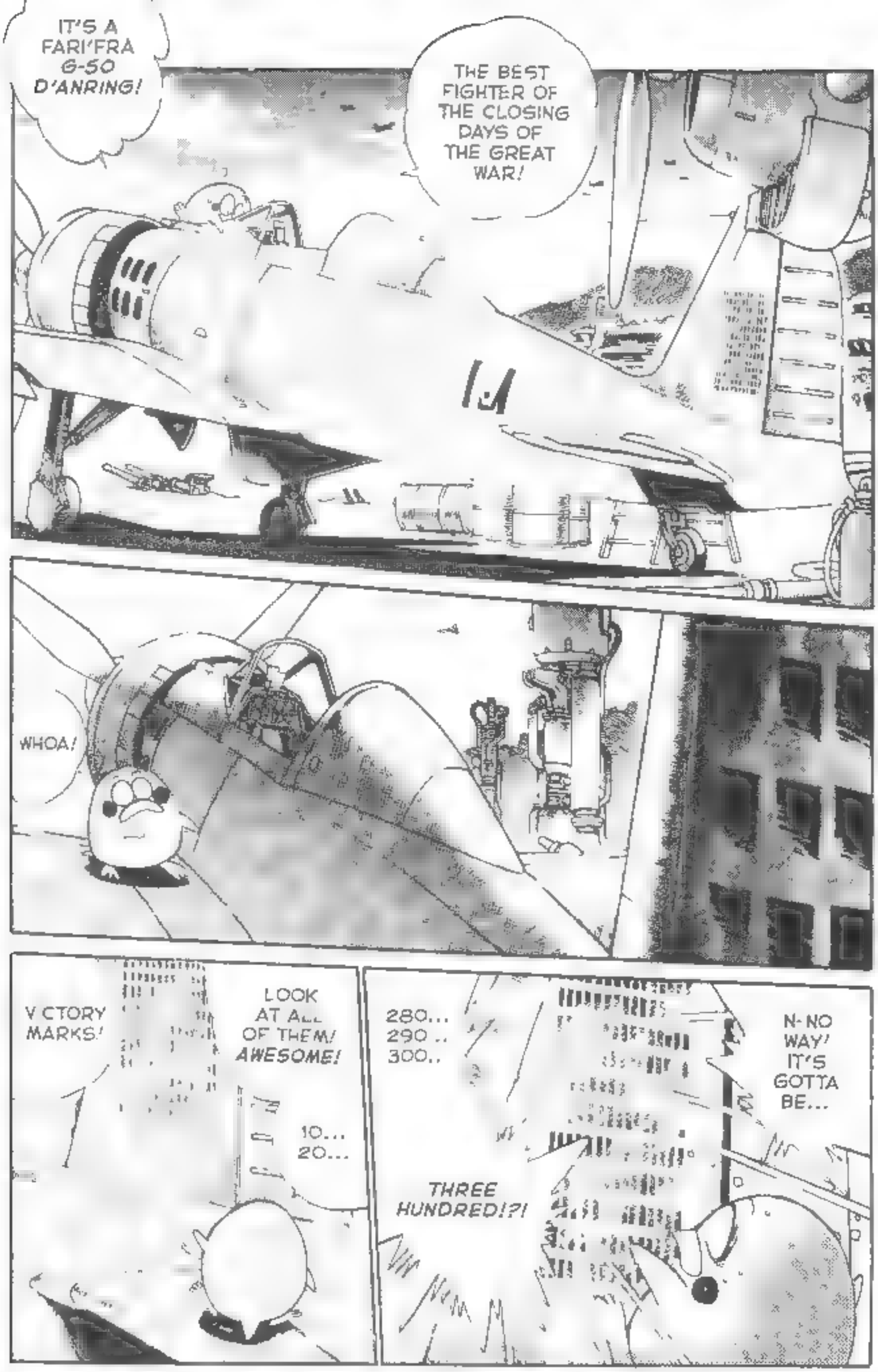
AFTER ALL, NOT SO LONG AGO I WAS AN "EAGLE" IN THE GLORIOUS YOUTH SPECIAL ATTACK SQUADRON OF NOSJIR!

♪ OFF WE GO, INTO THE ♪ WILD BLUE YONDER!

OF COURSE, ALL I FLEW WAS A NOSJIR-GUIDED MISSILE, BUT...

A MAN'S GOTTA DO WHAT A MAN'S GOTTA DO!

AH ...?


IT'S A FARI'FRA G-50 D'ANRING!
THE BEST FIGHTER OF THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE GREAT WAR!
WHOA!
V CTORY MARKS!
LOOK AT ALL OF THEM! AWESOME!
10... 20...
280... 290 .. 300..
THREE HUNDRED!?!
N-NO WAY! IT'S GOTTA BE...

...THE LEGENDARY SUPER ACE, *RAMUDA AL' HABAR!*

OH MY GOD! I NEVER DREAMED SOMEDAY I'D SEE THE FIGHTER OF THE GREAT *SUPER ACE* HIMSELF!!

MAYBE IF I TOUCH IT ALL OVER, HIS SKILL WILL RUB OFF ON ME!

AND THE SUPER ACE HIMSELF SAT HERE-- *RIGHT HERE!*

*300 KILLS!* IT'S THE MOST FAMOUS AVIATION RECORD IN HISTORY!

THEY LOOK A LITTLE FADED, THOUGH I'LL JUST TOUCH THEM UP A BIT!

HEY, *YOU!*

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING TO MY PLANE?!

ACK! I... uh... N NOTHING, SIR! YOUR VICTORY MARKS WERE A LITTLE FADED SO I THOLGHT... LM...
THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS! BEAT IT!!
Y-YES, S R!
I'M S-SORRY, S R!!
R GHT AWAY, S--
KBOOSH
E-EXCUSE ME, BUT... AREN'T YOU MAJOR RAMUDA, THE LEGENDARY F GHTER ACE?
THAT'S ANCIENT H STORY.
YOU'RE FROM NOSJ R, AREN'T YOU? JUST OVER THE BORDER FROM FARI'FRA..
YES SIR, MAJOR SIR! AND I, TOO, WAS A MILITARY AVIATOR!

THOSE NOSJIR KAMIKAZE MISSILES?
SORRY, KID, BUT THAT'S A *WEAPON*, NOT AN AIRPLANE.
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, SIR, *NOT SO!!* TRUE, AFTER I WASHED OUT OF BASIC FLIGHT TRAINING IT WAS THE ONLY THING I QUALIFIED FOR.
..BUT I'VE NEVER FOR ONE SINGLE DAY FORGOTTEN MY DREAM OF BEING A *TRUE* PILOT!
IF I'D JUST HAD A LITTLE MORE TIME FOR TRAINING...
...I'M SURE I COULD HAVE LIVED MY DREAMS OF FLIGHT! AND ALL MY FALLEN COMRADES WERE THE SAME!
AW, C'MON, KIDDO... I'M SORRY. I SHOULD NEVER HAVE SAID THAT. NOSJIR FOUGHT ITS BEST, AS MUCH AS FAR 'FRA D.D.
Snff
Snff
I SALUTE YOU, FELLOW WARRIOR OF THE AIR...

T'S TRUE, I TELL YOU, *TRUE!!* THE LEGENDARY *SUPER ACE* HIMSELF IS FIGHTING AT OUR SIDE!

YESSIREE, BOB! *RAMUDA AL' HABAR,* FARI'FRA A.R FORCE MAJOR! A TRJE KNIGHT OF THE WILD BLJE YONDER! YOL BETCHA
NO KIDD NG...? EVEN *I'VE* HEARD HIS NAME...

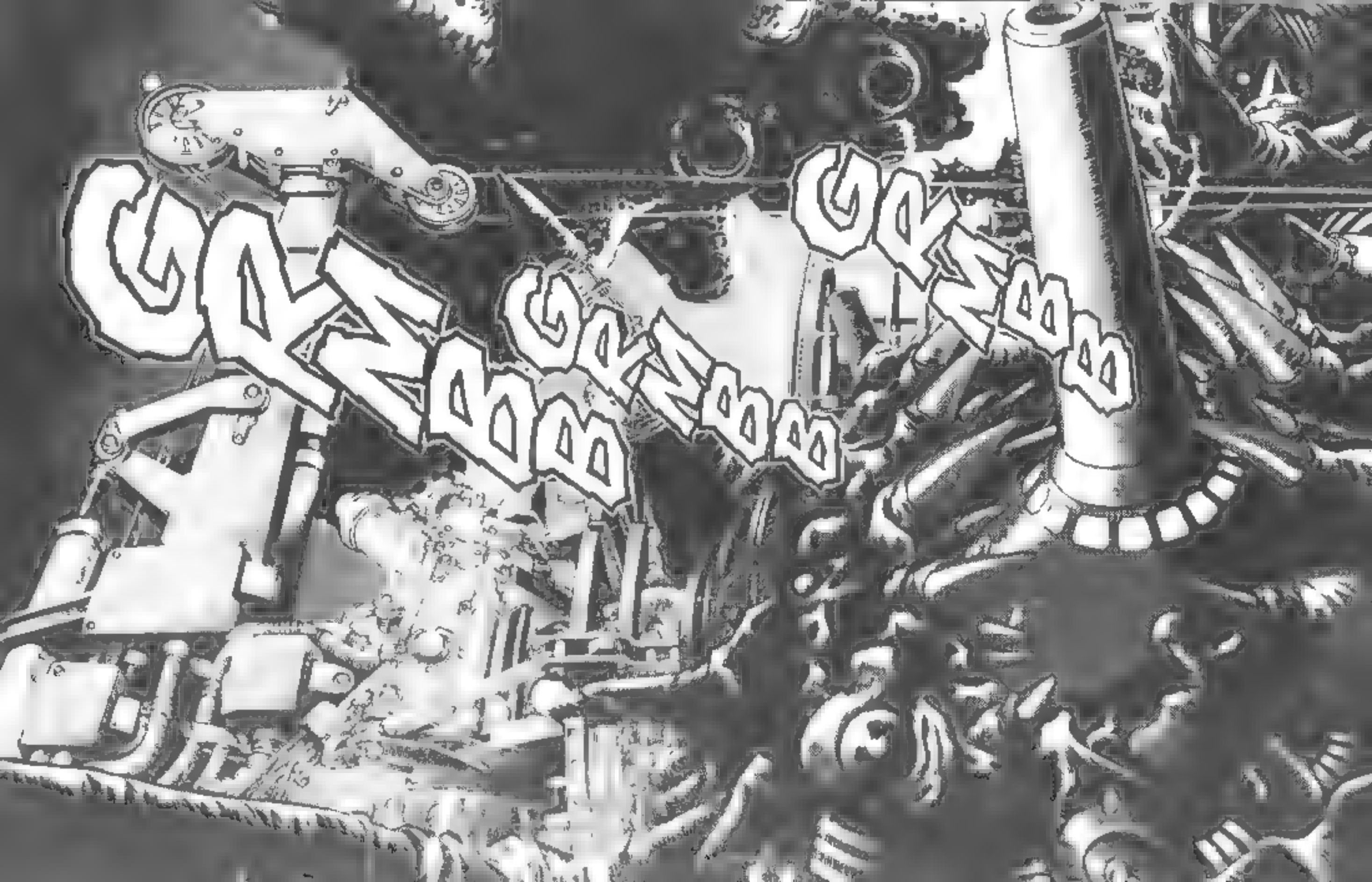
YEAH. JUST GOES TO SHOW WHAT A BJNCH OF MEAN MOTHERS WE'VE GOT IN AKOGILAND.
HMMM... I WONDER WHAT KIND OF MAN A *SUPER ACE* S...?

SHEE-IT, KARULA! PILOTS ARE A BJNCH OF FAT-ASSED SNOTS WHO FIGHT SITTING DOWN! WE *REAL* SOLDIERS ARE A DIFFERENT BREED!
OH, COME ON, DARD! DON'T BE LIKE THAT!

GEE... HE'S LIVING RIGHT HERE IN THE SAME CITY WE DO, I'D LOVE TO MEET HIM JUST ONCE
HMPH!

AAHN!
OOH!
NG!
HA HA HA
MMM
OOH
....

HUHN . . .?
I'M GOING BACK TO THE BAR.
WHY? WHAT'S UP?
BECAUSE, DEAR RAMUDA, YOU'VE BEEN THINKING OF SOME OTHER WOMAN THE WHOLE TIME I'VE BEEN MAKING LOVE TO YOU.
I HAVE?
YES I CAN TELL I AM A PROFESSIONAL AFTER ALL.
I IMAGINE YOU HIRED ME TO TRY AND FORGET HER.
BUT YOU FAILED... AND I FAILED. SORRY, DEAR.
SLEEP TIGHT, MAJOR.
....



HAIL, LEADER KURGH!
YOUR NEW PALACE IS EIGHTY PERCENT COMPLETE.

SOON LEADERS FROM ACROSS THE CONTINENT SHALL GATHER FOR MY LIEGE'S CORONATION, AND QUAIL AT THE SIGHT OF THE MIGHTIEST CITADEL ON GRIFFEL!

PRIME MINISTER BARBARROS!

LATELY YOU BRING ME NO NEWS OF BRIGANDS AND REBELS. I FIND THIS... OMINOUS.

M-MY LORD?!

H-HA, HA...

BUT THE GLORIOUS LIGHT OF MY MAJESTY HAS FLOODED THE ENTIRE CONTINENT!

REBELS? BRIGANDS? HAH! WHAT FOOLS WOULD DARE DEFY YOU?!

SHOULD SUCH CLRS EXIST, THEY WOULD BE OUTCASTS-- UNABLE TO SURVIVE IN THIS NEW WORLD ORDER.

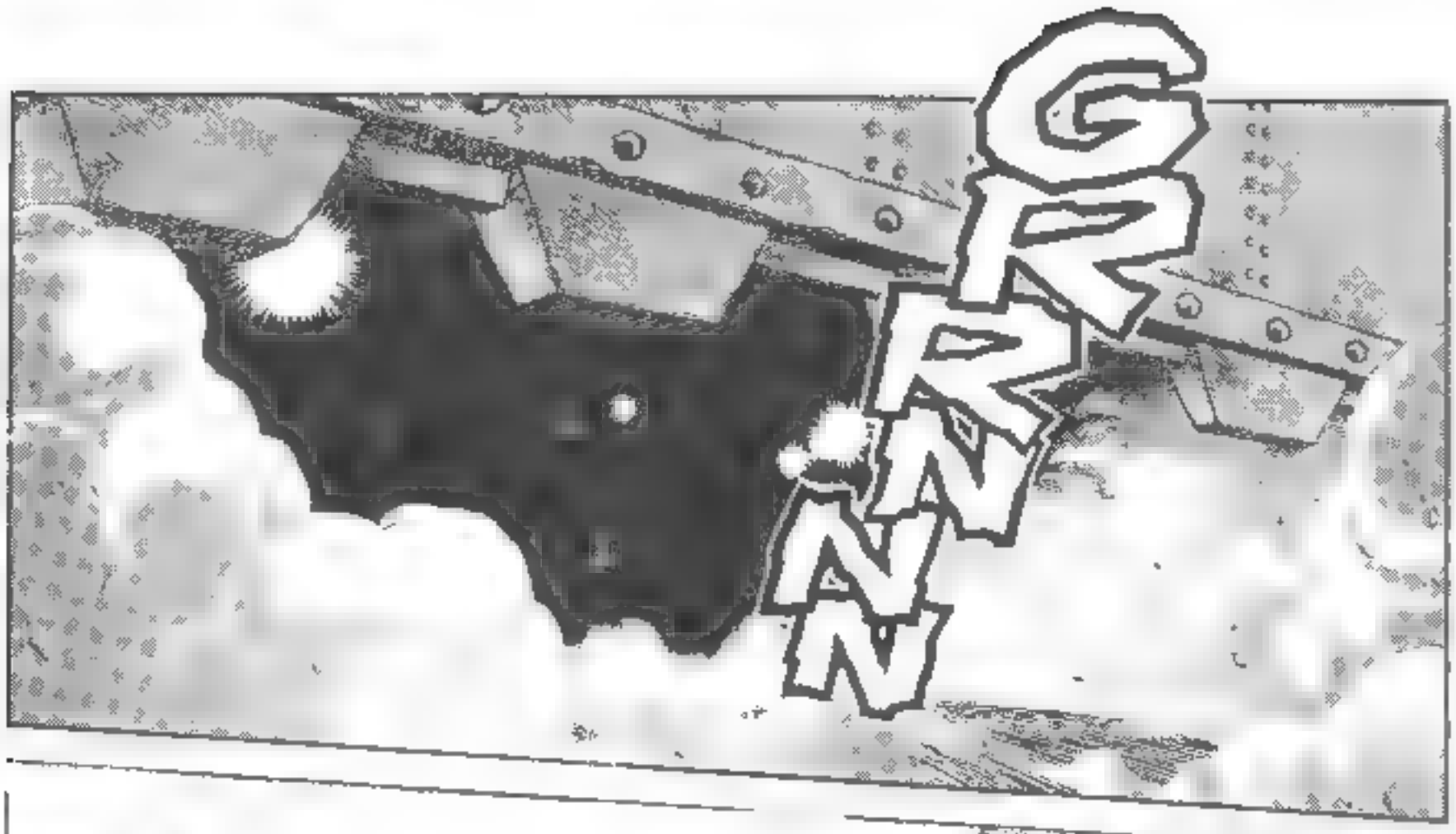
THEY WOULD DESTROY ONLY THEMSELVES

IF YOU SPEAK TRUE, THEN WELL AND GOOD, BARBARROS ..

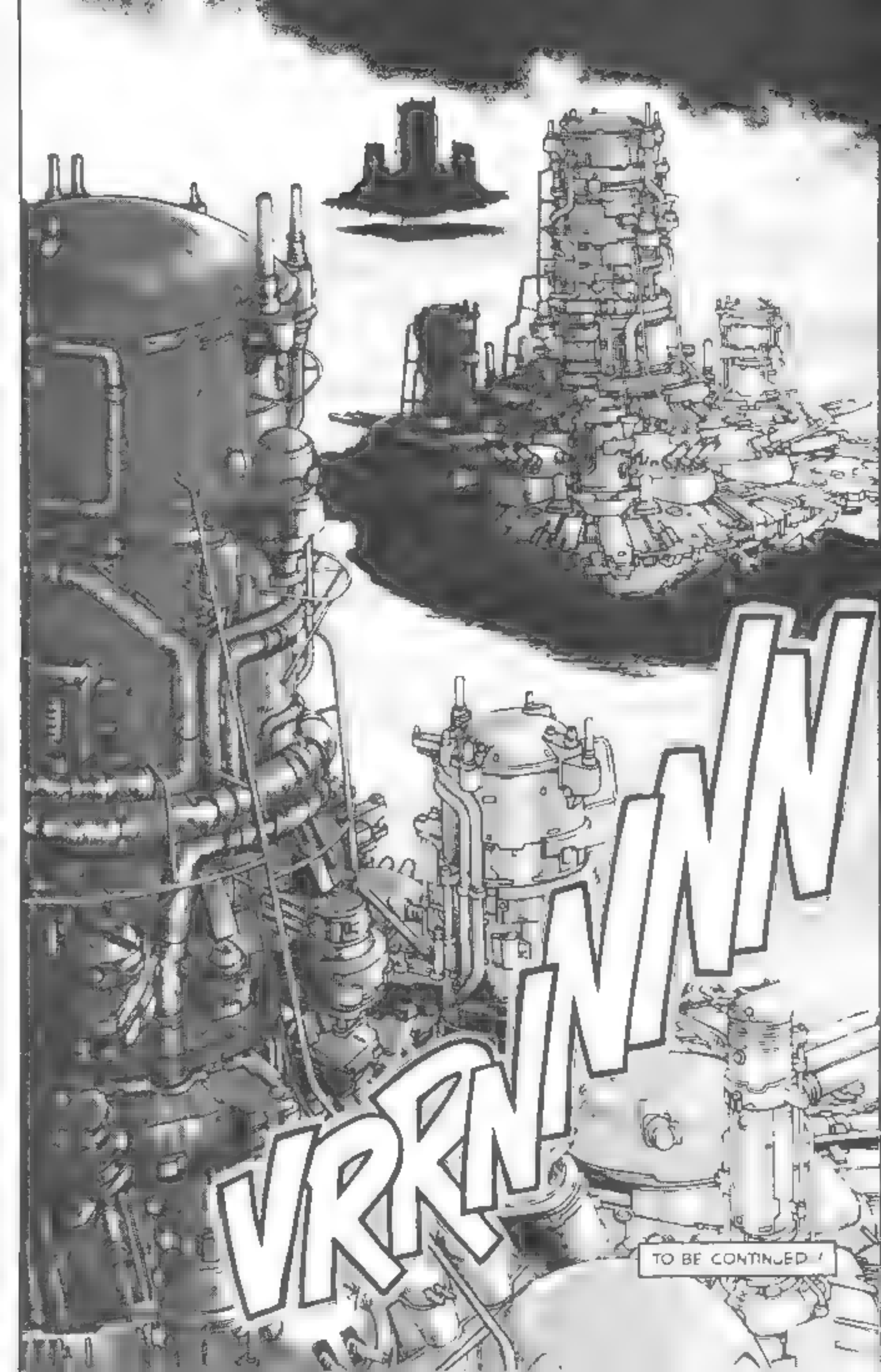
AND YET REMEMBER - THERE ARE ALWAYS THOSE WHO WOULD OVERTURN THE NATURAL ORDER!

MY LORD!

AS ALWAYS, I TAKE YOUR TEACHINGS TO HEART


GRRNNN

RMMMBBB
RMMMBBB
RMMMBBB


VRRN
NN
TO BE CONTINUED!

YAHOO!
HEY!
YAAH!

CONFOUND IT! DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND ANYTHING?!

YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE EMPIRE'S *REAL* POWER, OR YOU WOULDN'T SAY THAT!

OH, YEAH?! ALL *YOU* EVER DO IS TELL US HOW TOUGH THEY ARE! I THINK YOU'RE OVER ESTIMATING THEM!

BEHOLD, EVERYBODY! MY HYPER-MIRACLE SUPER-DISINTEGRATOR! SUCCESS IS ASSURED!

GACK!

DIS-INTEGRATED!

FLUMP

WHAT WAS THAT? ARE YOU *MOCKING ME?!*

MOCK YA? NAW... JUST REMINDIN' YOU YER FAMOUS SAND-SUBMERSIBLE FLEET'S THE WEAKEST, MOST LOSINGEST NAVY IN HISTORY!

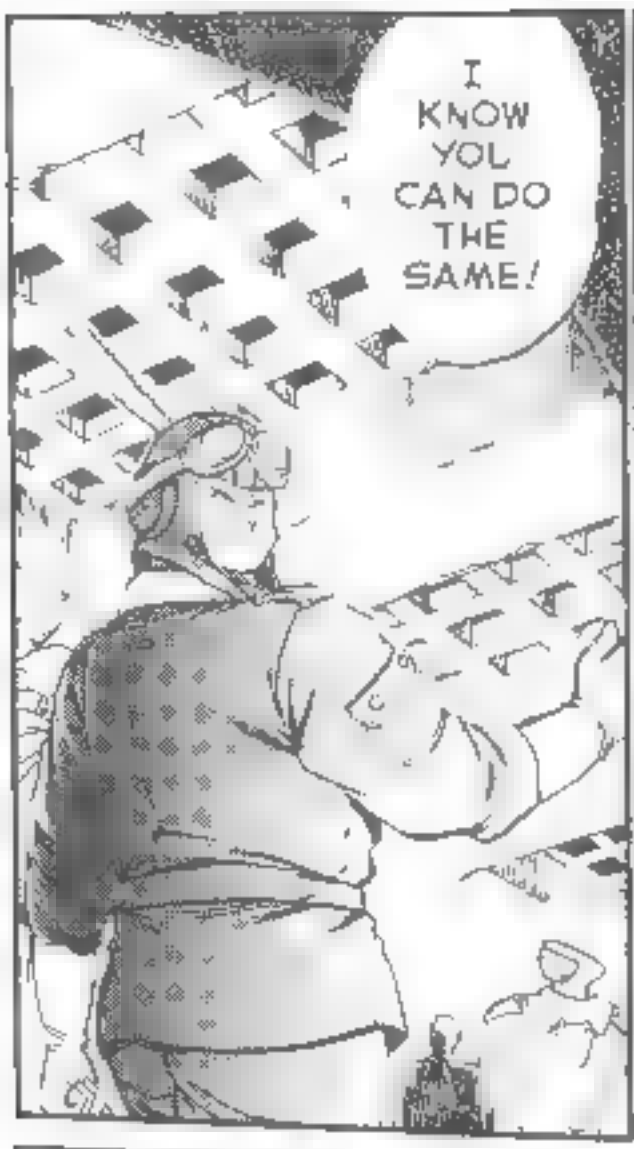
THAT'S BECAUSE OF THOSE CORRUPT SCUM AT THE TOP! OUR NOBLE SAILORS ARE *HEROES!*

DAMN YOUR KOOLAK HIDE! ALWAYS SHOOTIN' OFF YOUR MOUTH!
WHY DOESN'T OUR SECTOR HAVE GUN EMPLACE-MENTS?
OH, MAN! I WANNA KICK BUTT NOW!
MY PO NT IS, YOL BLEED N' SPENYA JERKWADS AIN'T WORTH--
HEH . / I'D HEARD PRINCESS KARJLA OF LEDOMIAM WAS BRAVE, BUT I THINK YOU'RE A LILY-LIVERED COWARD!
WHA--?
WHY YOU ...!!
NO ONE CA... S ME A COWARD!
YOJ DIE!!
HAH! MORE BIG WORDS! TRY IT, G.RLIE!

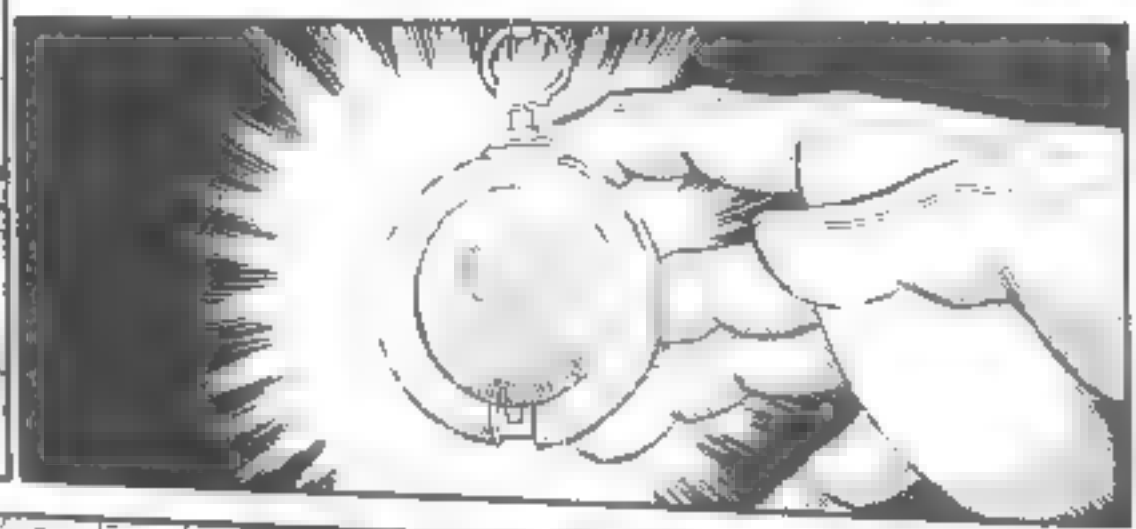
KANG
SPRAKK
?#$%!
$%#!
!!!
WHUD
FWHAM
SMAK

LUNCH-
TIME,
GENTLEMEN.
HRMPH

THIS IS JUST HOPELESS! EVERYONE'S TOTALLY DEADLOCKED.
HOW CAN WE BEAT KURGH LIKE THIS?!
OH, GODDESS I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
IT'S JUST THE FIRST STEP. HAVE PATIENCE
HUH ...?
YOU'RE THE YOUNGER SISTER OF QUEEN ROSALIA CORRECT?
IN THE MIDST OF A LOSING BATTLE, YOUR SISTER SAVED YOUR HONORED FATHER AND LED HER COUNTRY SPLENDIDLY IN TIME OF WAR.
AND YOU ARE ..?


I KNOW YOU CAN DO THE SAME!

WHOA! WAIT A MINUTE!
YOU DROPPED THIS LAST WEEK.



HEE HEE... SHE'S AWFULLY CUTE YOUR SWEET-HEART, I MEAN
YOU OPENED IT?!

I'M SORRY... I'M TOO NOSY. BUT I DIDN'T MEAN ANY HARM!
I TOLD YOU. HANG THAT HEAD, GIRL!

NO.. NO, IT'S FINE. I'M JUST GRATEFUL YOU SAVED IT FOR ME.
I PRAY FOR YOUR SUCCESS IN BATTLE, PRINCESS KARULA.

YOU KNOW WHO THAT WAS...? *RAMUDA AL' HABAR.*

*REALLY?!* THAT SUPER ACE MASAHIKO'S ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT?!

OOOH!

GEE, GUYS LIKE HIM REALLY *ARE* SOMETHING SPECIAL!

HMPH

I'M JOKING! *JOKING!* YOU'RE THE ONLY MAN FOR ME, DARD!

SO, NOW THAT WE'RE FEELING BETTER, LET'S EAT CHOW TIME

WHERE SHOULD WE GO? CHINA DRAGON? THE CRIMSON ROSE?

ALL RIGHT! DIG IN!
YER A PIG, GIRL...
HEY, WE GOT MEETINGS ALL DAY, RIGHT? GOTTA REFUEL!
SAY . HERE'S SOME NEWS ABOUT KURGH.
THE SLIMY WORM... SAYS HERE HE PUT UP A STATUE TO GUSTAV IN HIS NEW PALACE.
PRETTY BALLSY, CONSIDERING HE MURDERED THE OLD GUY
LOOK HERE, DARD... DON'T TALK ABOUT THOSE CREEPS WHEN I'M TRYING TO ENJOY MY LUNCH.
ISN'T THERE ANY GOOD NEWS .?
YOU GONNA FINISH THAT? IF NOT, I'LL EAT IT!
HANDS OFF! I WAS SAVING IT FOR LAST!
THAT'S SO GROSS.

WHAT'S WRONG, RUA?

IT'S SOME WOMAN OVER THERE SHE'S GOT MANNERS LIKE A PIG, AND SHE'S EATING ENOUGH FOR THREE MEN!
IT MAKES ME ASHAMED... ASHAMED TO BE A WOMAN. IT'S LIKE, GIRLS LIKE HER DRAG US *ALL* DOWN, RIGHT?
HEH HEH

TIMES ARE TOUGH, RUA... EVERY MEAL WE HAVE MAY BE OUR LAST.
WE'VE ALL GOT TO SURVIVE AS BEST WE CAN. DON'T BE SO JUDGMENTAL.

I MEAN, LOOK AT ME! I'M EATING WAY MORE THAN I USED TO.
AND WHAT'S WRONG WITH *YOU* GUYS?! QUIT STARING AT US LIKE THAT!!
BUT MA'AM WE'S *AWFUL* HUNGRY

REMINDS ME OF MY SISTER KARJLA... SHE WAS ALWAYS A REAL EATER! WHY SHE'D JUST *INHALE* A GOOD BAKED MURI TROUT--*WHOLE!*
SIGHH... I WISH I COULD SEE HER EAT AGAIN, RUA.

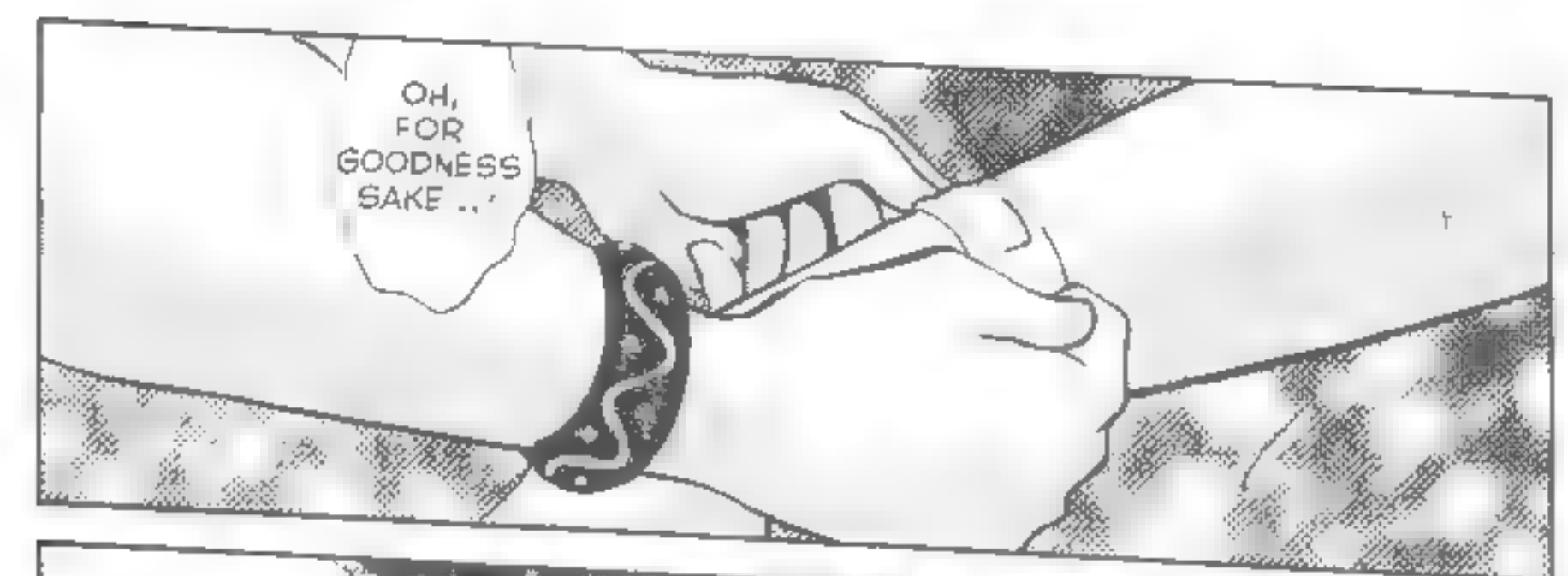
KA -
KARULA
...?!
MANGE?

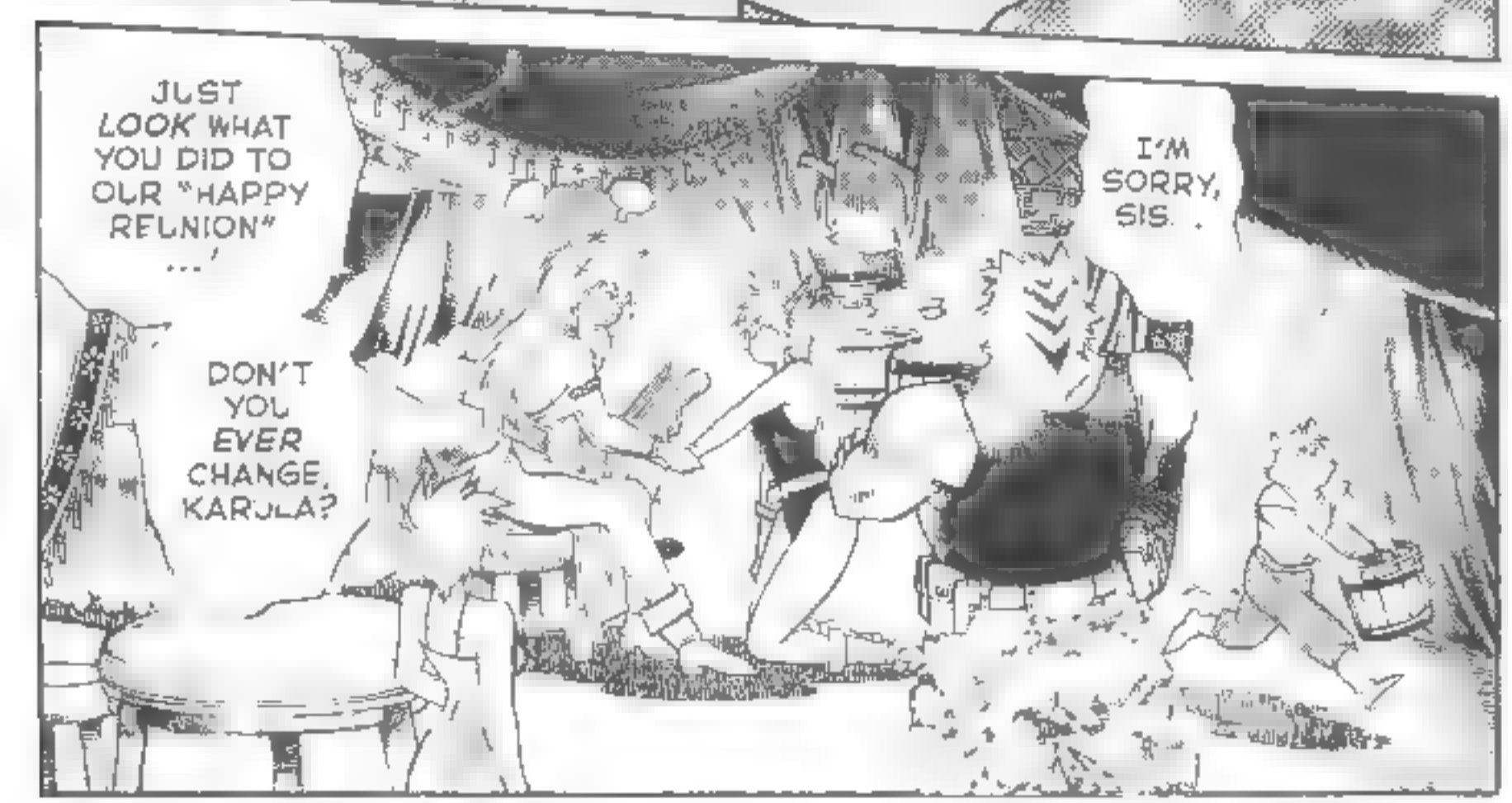
HUH?
WHA—
WHO'S THAT? A FRIEND?
RO-ROSALIA ...?
YOWCH!!
KRAK
KOOSH

OH OH...
HOT HOT HOT!!!
WHRAK
YA FLAMIN' IDJIT! LOOK WHAT YA DID!
SKRASH
HEY, YOU BITCH!
WHAT THE HELL YA THINK YER DOIN' ...?!
SCREW YOU!
SPLAT
BWA HAW HAW!!
LOOKS GOOD ON YA', BABE.
OH DOES IT, NOW ...?

WHAM
YOU GOT SOME NERVE, BOYS!
OH, NO! NOT AGAIN...
SKRAWH WHAM
FIRES AND FIGHTS ARE THE FLOWERS OF AKOGILAND, THEY SAY...
WHAM
WHOS
BLUBBLE BLUP

SKREAKOOM
KFLUNCH


OH, FOR GOODNESS SAKE ..'


JUST LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO OUR "HAPPY REUNION" ...'
I'M SORRY, SIS. .
DON'T YOU EVER CHANGE, KARULA?

SOMEDAY YOU'LL *REALLY* GET HURT, AND THEN YOU'LL *REALLY* BE SORRY.

YES YES MOMMY

:sniff:

BUT... BUT I'M JUST SO GLAD YOU'RE OKAY...

AND *I'M* GLAD YOU'RE JUST THE SAME...

OH, IT'S SO *GOOD* TO SEE YOU, ROSALIA.

WHAT'S THIS...? *TEARS? YOU?*

ALL GROWN UP AND STILL MY LITTLE SISTER..

ROSALIA...
LET ME INTRODUCE YOU FORMALLY THIS TIME.

MEET MY MAN DARD HE'S A MERCENARY.
MY PLEASURE MA'AM.

FACT IS...
-psst-
-psst

YOU MEAN ..?!
HEH, HEH, HEH... YEP!

I MEAN, NOT UNTIL THE WAR'S OVER, BUT THEN

MR. DARD I THANK YOU FOR ACCEPTING MY TERRIBLE LITTLE SISTER INTO YOUR FAMILY.
"TERRIBLE" ..?

THERE NOW. IT'S PLENTY LATE..

...AND YOUR SISTER MUST BE EXHAUSTED. LET'S HIT THE SACK.

HEY, SIS! YOU CAN SLEEP WITH *ME* TONIGHT, JUST LIKE OLD TIMES!

OKAY, OKAY!

.....!!

Ah-Oh

I... I DON'T CARE IF YOU *ARE* SISTERS! THAT'S *TOO MUCH!*

MISTRESS ROSALIA SPENDS HER NIGHTS WITH *ME!*

HAAH ..?

ROSALIA ...?

A HA HA... ER... IT'S SORTA LIKE... UM, HOW SHOULD I PUT IT...? UH, RUA AND I KINDA. .

JUST *TELL HER,* MISTRESS!

YOU AND I ARE CENSORED WE ARE!

ACK?

OOG!

EVERY NIGHT WE CENSORED AND CENSORED

JUST LAST NIGHT WE CENSORED UNTIL THE SUN CAME UP!

OH, WHAT SILLY THINGS SHE SAYS, THE LITTLE DEAR! HA, HA!

BUT WE--

mmgf

"MISTRESS" ROSALIA ...?

ULP!

WELL, I SEE THAT ALL KINDS OF "INTERESTING" THINGS MUST HAVE HAPPENED ON YOUR TRAVELS, SISTER DEAREST...

NO, W-WAIT! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT! IT'S JUST, UM...

NO, ROSALIA! I WANT TO MAKE THIS PERFECTLY CLEAR RIGHT NOW!!

THERE, THERE, SNAKEY... LET THE TWO SISTERS HAVE A NIGHT TO CATCH UP WITH EACH OTHER, EH?
OKAY?
OWW! LEMME GO! ROSALIA!
I'LL KEEP YA' WARM TONIGHT, DARLIN'.
GUH-ROSS! I HATE MEN! YUCK!!
JUST WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL, DARD DEAREST?!
AHH...

YOU LOOK SO HAPPY, KARLA.

HEH, HEH... YEAH.

I MEAN, THERE WERE BAD TIMES TOO, BUT.

I'M SO GLAD. I THOUGHT I'D NEVER SEE YOU SMILE AGAIN.

GOTTA SMILE OR YOU GET WRINKLES, RIGHT?

CAN'T FROWN ALL THE TIME.

HE SEEMS LIKE HE'S A GOOD MAN, YOUR DADD

YEAH, WELL... YOU SEEM PRETTY HAPPY YOURSELF, ROSALIA. YOU'VE GOT A LOVER WHO *IDOLIZES* YOU...

STOP IT! I DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE! I'M *NOT* THAT KIND OF GIRL, UNDERSTAND?!

OH, YEAH, RIGHT. SO, COME ON... TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FIRST TIME TOGETHER
WHY DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?!
NOTHING SPECIAL. FUTURE REFERENCE, MAYBE ?
ORRR ... YOU COULD DEMONSTRATE IF YOU PREFER
YOU KNOW I SWING BOTH WAYS, TOO...
ARE YOU CRAZY?!
NOT IN FRONT OF MY SISTER!
C'MON. ONLY HALF-SISTER, REMEMBER?
SO.. UM .. LET ME GUESS... YOU STARTED LIKE THIS...
AND THEN...
MMM

Y-YEAH... I BET IT FELT *REALLY* GOOD. .

...SO THEN *SHE'D* START TO RESPOND, AND--

ENOUGH *STOP!* I SAID *STOP THAT!!*

OW

AWW, C'MON... AT LEAST LET ME *FINISH!*

I WAS JUST GETTING INTO IT

I CAN'T *BELIEVE* HER

DOESN'T SHE HAVE ANY SHAME?!

BUT YOU KNOW... IT'S NOT MY PLACE, S'S, BUT ISN'T IT TIME YOU FOUND YOURSELF A PROPER FIANCÉ?

FATHER WAS ALWAYS WORRIED, REMEMBER? THAT YOU MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO GIVE THE REALM AN HEIR...

HE WAS ALWAYS SAYING YOU WERE SO SPECIAL THERE WASN'T A MAN ANYWHERE WHO WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU...

LOOK AT WHO I ENDED UP WITH--A SCRUFFY MERCENARY FROM RADOM! IF WE WERE BACK IN LEDOMIAM, FATHER WOULD NEVER FORGIVE ME.

I WONDER HOW HE IS... I ASK EVERYONE WHO COMES HERE IF THEY'VE HEARD ANYTH NG...
...BUT NO ONE KNOWS WHERE HE .S. I GUESS THE EMPIRE TOOK H M PRISONER, HUH?

I MEAN, IT'S GREAT THAT WE'RE FINALLY TOGETHER AGAIN, BUT...
KARULA...

...BUT I'M SURE HE'S ALL RIGHT! I MEAN, FATHER'S MAG C IS SO AWESOME... I BET HE'S HIDING OUT SOMEWHERE, WITH SOME BABE MASSAGING THOSE ACHING MUSCLES OF HIS!

S S...?
WH... WHAT IS .T?
TEARS ...?!

TO BE CONTINUED

# THE HIDDEN WAR

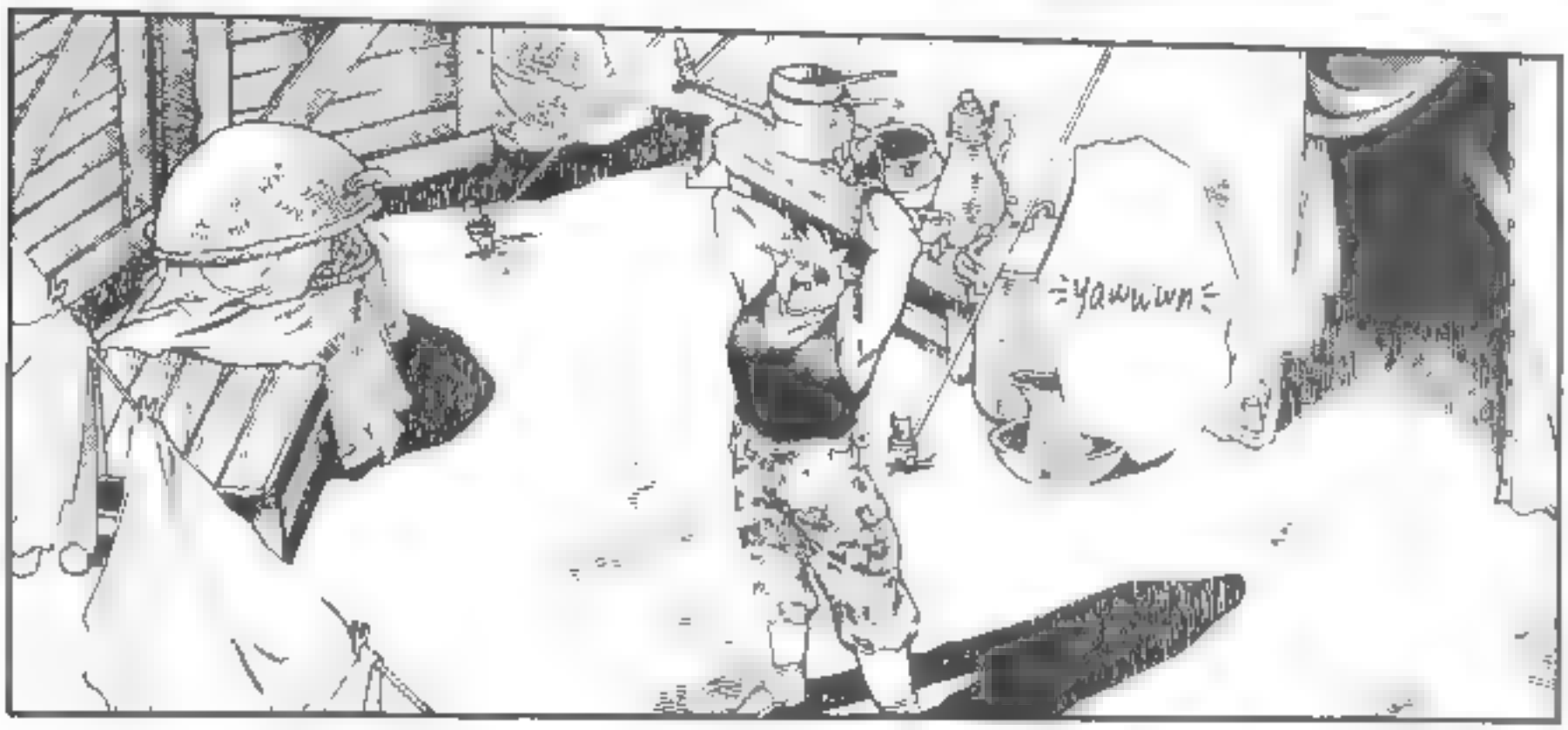
ブラックラグーン

Benkuan Tomes
c/o Dark Horse Comics
10956 SE Main St
Milwaukie, OR 97222
or e-mail davidl@dhorse.com

# DRAKUUN

# THE HIDDEN WAR

## PART FIVE



MAN, OH MAN... DIDN'T GET A WINK OF SLEEP AT ALL LAST NIGHT. SHE MAY LOOK LIKE A SNAKE, BUT SHE DRINKS LIKE A FISH!
HUH?
YO, KARJLA! NOT LIKE YOU TO BE UP SO EARLY.
DID YOU AND BIG SISTER HAVE A NICE SLUMBER PARTY LAST NIGHT..?
uh-oh

NOW, NOW, BABE... WHAT'S WITH ALL THE TEARS?
DARD ...?
DON'T TELL ME YOU TWO ARE FIGHTING ALREADY...
WHAT, GIRL?! TELL ME WHAT'S WRONG
MY FATHER... DADDY...
SHE SAYS... HE'S DEAD...
WHAT ABOUT HIM ..?

I SEE ..
THAT BASTARD KURGH'S WORK ...?

DON'T YOU WORRY-- WE'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM BUT GOOD!

Y-YEAH!
DAMN RIGHT I WILL...

G-GOOD MORNING.

WHAT THE DEVIL?! LOOK AT YOU!
DIDN'T YOU SLEEP AT ALL?
SORTA... MAYBE... WELL, NO.
BEL' COFFEE, PLEASE.
LISTEN HERE, KID... YOUR PRECIOUS PRINCESS MINERVA IS JUST TIRED, THAT'S ALL. YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY UP PLAYING NURSEMAID.
BUT THAT'S ALL I CAN DO, RUFUS.
OH YEAH, IT SOUNDS REAL NOBLE. BUT MAYBE YOU WERE... TAKING ADVANTAGE OF YOUR SLEEPING BEAUTY, MM?
RUFUS... THERE ARE THINGS YOU CAN SAY AND THINGS YOU CAN'T... SO WATCH IT!
SO... IS SHE STILL SOUND ASLEEP? YOU SHOULD BE PLEASED.
OH, YEAH? WHY'S THAT?
SHE MAY HAVE CALLED YOU A TRAITOR, KID, BUT OBVIOUSLY SHE TRUSTS YOU.
UNTIL NOW SHE'S BEEN ON THE RUN FROM KURGH'S MINIONS, DIDN'T DARE SNATCH EVEN A MOMENT OF SHUT-EYE.

OH, YEAH... I GET IT! HMM... MAYBE...
THAP
NO NO I DON'T MEAN
MMM... I SLEPT WELL
G-GOOD MORNING, YOUR HIGHNESS!
ER... MY APOLOGIES FOR THE CRUDE SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS...

HMPH!

WANT A CUP OF MUD? HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IT BLACK..
DOUBLE DECAF CAPPUC-CINO WITH A SHOT, IF YOU PLEASE!!

OH, MAN... SHE HATES ME!

OH, YEAH, RIGHT, LADY. YOU EXPECT THAT IN THE MIDDLE OF A BLOODY DESERT?
H-HOW DARE YOU?! YOU'RE IN THE PRESENCE OF HER AUGUST MAJESTY! WATCH YOUR TONGUE

ENOUGH!
ENOUGH OF THAT..
A PRINCESS WITHOUT A KINGDOM IS NO PRINCESS AT ALL.

I'M JUST LIKE THAT KARULA WOMAN..
NAY, NOT SO, MY LADY! WE SHALL DRIVE OUT THE TRAITOR KURGH AND--
KREITAS!

WHY DON'T YOU GET SOME SLEEP?

YOUR EYES ARE LIKE HOLES IN A BLANKET.

NONSENSE! IT'S NOTHING! A ROYAL GUARD HAS NO NEED OF SLEEP

I SAID *SLEEP*, AND THAT'S AN *ORDER*, DAMN IT! I CAN'T RISK HAVING YOU NODDING OFF WHEN I NEED YOU!

B BUT WHO WILL SERVE MY LADY WHILE...

RIGHT NOW I DON'T NEED *SERVANTS*, KREITAS! I NEED *WARRIORS!*

AND IF YOU DON'T MIND, I NEED THEM *WELL RESTED!*

MY... MY LADY! I SHALL DO MY DUTY AS YOU REQUEST!

HALLELUJAH! MY LADY CONSIDERS ME A *WARRIOR!*

WELL, WELL, WELL.

I CAN HARDLY STAND TO WATCH HIM.

HE'S SO PACK FULL OF LOYALTY AND RESTRAINT HE PRACTICALLY SQUEAKS WHEN HE WALKS.

ARE YOU CHASTISING ME RUFUS?

LOOK, I UNDERSTAND YOUR SUSPICION. BETRAYED BY YOUR RETAINERS, DRIVEN FROM YOUR OWN LAND...

...BUT BACK WHEN ALL YOUR FINE, TRUSTWORTHY LIEUTENANTS WERE FALLING OVER THEMSELVES TO BROWN-NOSE KURGH..

...THAT KID THERE WAS THE ONLY ONE TO FLAT-OUT ACCUSE HIM OF TREASON--AND HE NEARLY GOT HIMSELF KILLED FOR IT.

YOU'VE LOST YOUR STATUS, YOUR RANK, EVERYTHING BUT YOUR ROYAL BLOOD ALONE... AND HE'S *STILL* READY TO DIE FOR YOU.

AND JUST WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS...?

H-HOW SHOULD I KNOW?

LOVE, MY LADY FAIR! LOVE!
HOW SWEET!
WH-WHAT?!
Y-YOU CAN'T POSS BLY BE SER OUS... HOW.. WHY.
BJT BACK TO WHAT REALLY MATTERS
RIGHT NOW, TRUST HIM OR NOT.
KREITAS IS PRACTICALLY THE ONLY RETAINER, NDEED, ONE OF THE ONLY FRIENDS YOU'VE GOT ON THIS WHOLE VAST CONTINENT.
FRIENDS.

AND SO... NEXT TIME, HAVE A KIND WORD OR TWO FOR HIM, WHY DON'T YOU?

AND NOW I LEAVE YOU IN THE COMPETENT HANDS OF BEL'L.

THANK YOU SIR!

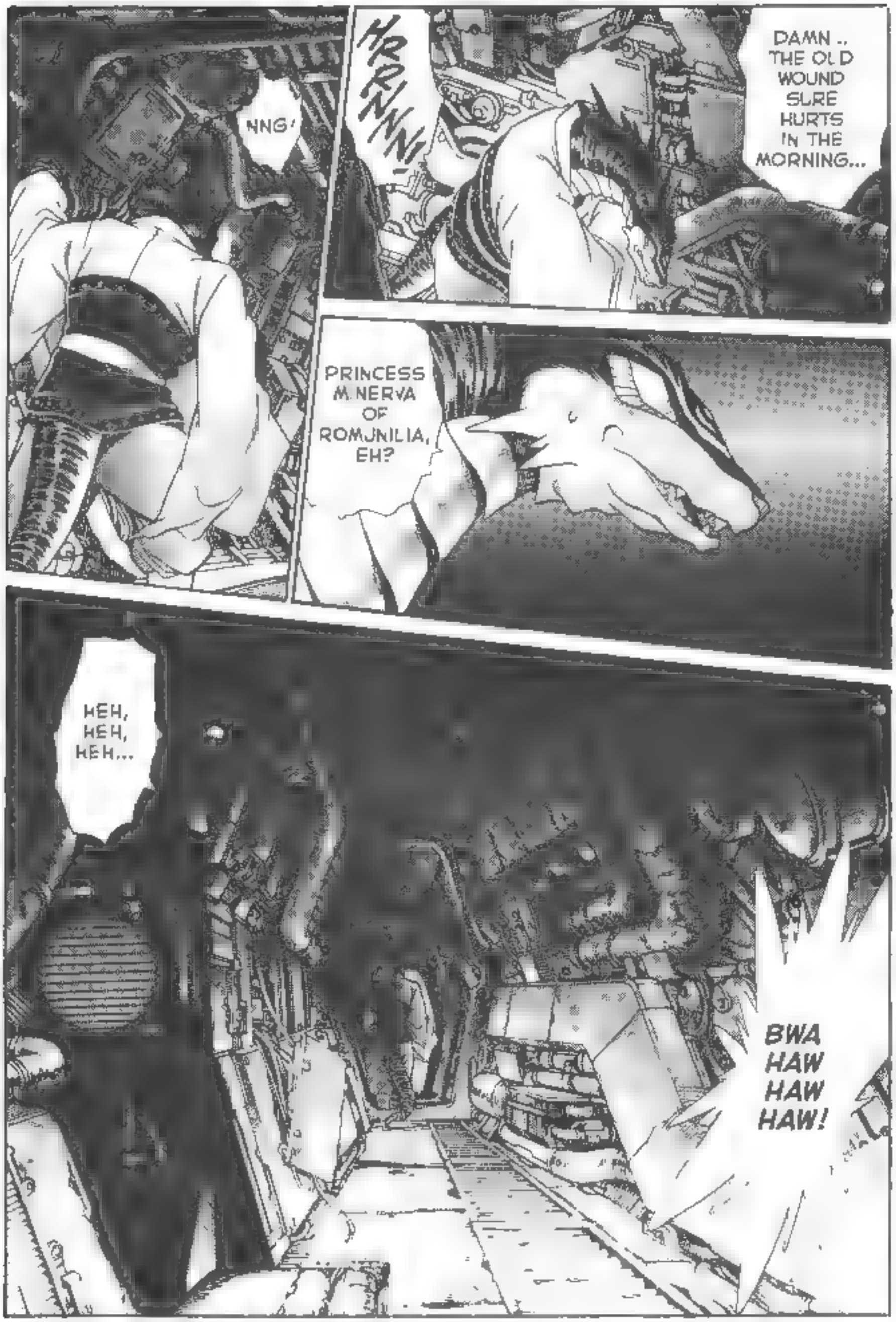
STOP!

WHY ARE YOU HELPING US?

BECAUSE I'M A FOOL WHO LIKES TO SIDE WITH THE UNDERDOG.

IS THAT GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS...?

....
...


NNG!
HRRNNN!
DAMN .. THE OLD WOUND SURE HURTS IN THE MORNING...
PRINCESS MINERVA OF ROMUNILIA, EH?
HEH, HEH, HEH...
BWA HAW HAW HAW!

YOU HEARD?! THE EMPIRE'S SENDING A PUNITIVE EXPEDITION
YEAH, A FRIGG N' FLEET, MAN... BATTLESHIPS AND ALL!
THE GUYS AT THE TOP, THEY'RE TOTALLY FREAKED.
GR NNGRNNGRNN
WHATCHA GONNA DO?
DO? YEAH, LIKE WE GOT A CHOICE?
STAY ALIVE, AT LEAST YA GOT A CHANCE, R GHT?

GENTLEMEN! THE SITUATION IS PRESSING!

ACCORDING TO INFORMATION FROM THE SYNDICATE AND OTHER SOURCES, POWERFUL IMPERIAL ARMIES ARE MANEUVERING INTO POSITION.

THEIR MISSION, OF COURSE, IS TO TAKE OUT AKOGILAND!

HAH! SO THEY'RE FINALLY COMING!

WE BEEN WAITIN' FOR THIS! PAYBACK TIME!

-= u.p =-

HUH?

WHASSUP? YOU OKAY, BABE?

YEAH.. JUST FEEL A BIT... QUEASY.

WHY'S THAT? YOU EAT SOME BAD GRUB?

HAH! THE WAY *YOU* EAT, YA PROBABLY SCARFED DOWN A PLATE OR TWO ALONG WITH YER BREAKFAST..

ENOUGH OF YOUR WISECRACKS, FURBALL! I'VE JUST BEEN *REAL HUNGRY*, Y'KNOW?

PRINCESS KARULA!

!!!!!!

P-PRESENT...

MAN, I SURE WISH HE WOULDN'T YELL LIKE THAT.

TOOK TEN YEARS OFF MY LIFE.

I'M TOLD YOU LED THE AIRBORNE CAVALRY IN LEDOMIAM WITH GREAT SUCCESS. I'D LIKE TO HEAR YOUR OPINION

OKAY, OKAY. NO PROB.

NOW LISTEN UP, PEOPLE! THIS BATTLE CAN'T BE WON BY *DEFENSE*.

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE HAVE TO TAKE THE WAR TO THE ENEMY!

B-BUT... WHERE?

IS THERE A CHOICE?! TO *BELGORAND*, CAPITAL OF ROMUNILIA!

WAAAAT?!

THE IMPERIAL CITY?!

THAT'S *CRAZY!* TOTALLY OFF THE WALL! WE CAN'T GO STRAIGHT FOR THE CAPITAL!

YEAH! BELGORAND'S A PERFECT, IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS! WE COULDN'T EVEN GET CLOSE!

IMPREGNABLE? THERE'S NO SUCH THING!

FORTRESS OR NOT, PEOPLE BUILT IT, RIGHT?!

LOOK, WHAT I WANT ALL OF YOU TO GET INTO YOUR HEADS IS THAT IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO DRIVE BACK AN IMPERIAL ASSAULT!

I *KNOW* THE EMPIRE'S STRENGTH! I *SPEAK THE TRUTH!*

IF WE WANT TO LIBERATE THE CONTINENT AND LET OUR PEOPLES LIVE IN PEACE...

...EMPEROR KURGH AND HIS LACKEYS MUST *DIE!*

HMMM... SHE'S GOT A POINT.

IT'S A *FREE-FOR-ALL,* MAN! I'M *INTO THAT!*

OF COURSE I KNOW IT WON'T BE A PICNIC!

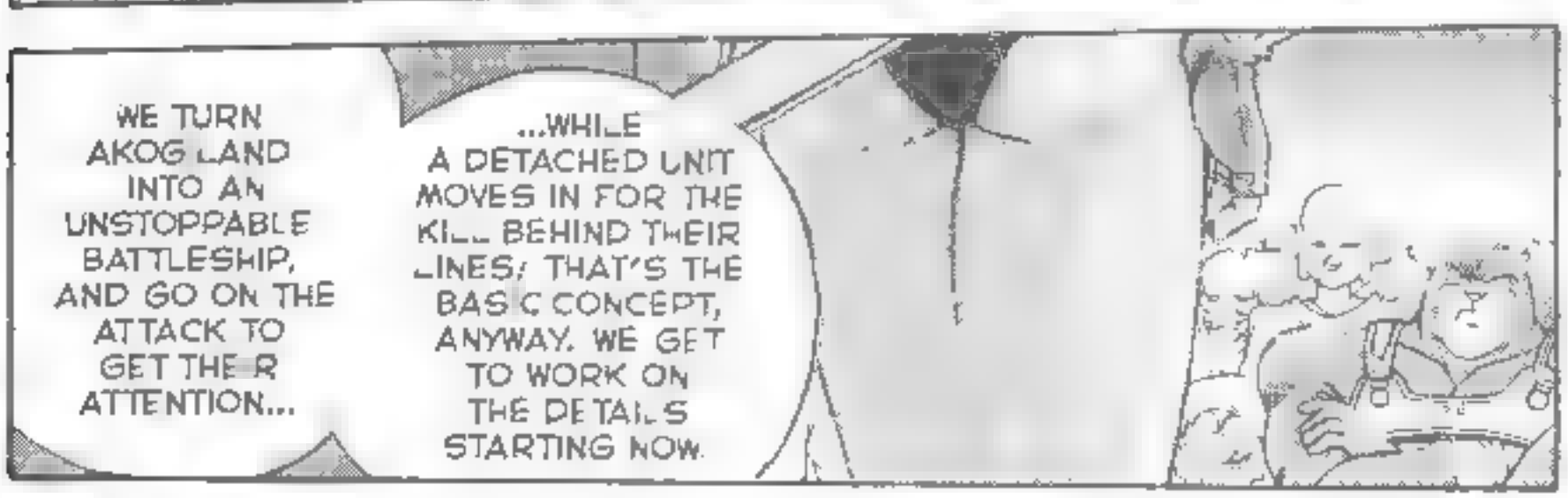
FIRST WE NEED THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INTELLIGENCE WE CAN GET! EVERY ONE OF YOU HAS TO DO YOUR PART!

CERTAINLY THE AIR POWER WE HAVE GATHERED HERE CAN BE USED MORE EFFECTIVELY FOR OFFENSE.
BUT THERE'S A FUEL SHORTAGE. WE CAN'T WAIT MUCH LONGER.

I DUNNO .. RUMOR HAS IT THAT BASTARD KURGH'S BUILT HIMSELF A NEW CITADEL.
YEAH, YEAH.. AND THEY SAY IT'S AS BIG AS AKOG LAND.
HOW THE HELL DO YOU TAKE SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

FULL FRONTAL ASSAULT!
ARGHHH! I KNEW IT!

BUT THAT'S JUST TO FAKE THEM OUT, RIGHT?
Dingg!
THE MAN WINS A CIGAR


WE TURN AKOG LAND INTO AN UNSTOPPABLE BATTLESHIP, AND GO ON THE ATTACK TO GET THEIR ATTENTION...
...WHILE A DETACHED UNIT MOVES IN FOR THE KILL BEHIND THEIR LINES; THAT'S THE BASIC CONCEPT, ANYWAY. WE GET TO WORK ON THE DETAILS STARTING NOW.

OKAY, OPINIONS ABOUT PRINCESS KARULA'S PROPOSAL! DON'T BE SHY!
urp
?
EX... EXCUSE ME A M-MOMENT..
P-PLEASE... LET ME THROUGH ..
HEY?! YOU OKAY?!
HURRGH
AW, JEEZ, KARULA? ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY?
WANT ME TO GET A DOCTOR?
THIS IS SO WEIRD... I'M NOT EATING ANY DIFFERENTLY THAN USUAL... BUT I'M SO NAUSEOUS IN THE MORNINGS...
AH, HAH! MY LITTLE LOVE BIRDS!

SO.. HE'S KNOCKED YOU UP, EH?

LORD ALMIGHTY... NO MATTER HOW GREAT A SOLDIER YOU ARE, ONE OF THE BOYS, WHATEVER... NOT TO KNOW ABOUT A WOMAN'S MOST IMPORTANT... ESIGN
COME ON, SIS! IT'S MY FIRST TIME! WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?
SAY... THIS MEANS YOU WEREN'T USING... PROTECTION?
NO WAY, NEVER! I MEAN, WHAT COULD HAPPEN, HUH?
RIGHT ON! BESIDES, IT'S THE WOMAN'S PROBLEM, EH?
BUT, YOU KNOW...
...I'M GLAD, OUR BABY... DADD AND I... RIGHT IN HERE...
HA, HA... I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT.

OH, YEAH? WHY NOT? YOU FIGURE IT MIGHT BE SOMEONE ELSES...?
HEE, HEE!
WELL, WHATEVER, SISTER DEAR. IN ANY CASE-- CONGRATULATIONS!
DON'T BE A JERK!
YEAH.
COME ON, BABE! LET'S SEE A BIG DOPEY SMILE, OKAY?!
BUT... DARD, JUST LOOK AT THIS WORLD WE LIVE IN. IS IT RIGHT TO BRING A LITTLE BABY INTO IT?
KARULA...?
AND THIS WAR WITH THE EMPIRE'S ONLY GOING TO GET WORSE.
DARD, WHAT SHOULD I DO...?!
WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY, GIRL?

TO BE CONTINUED!!

WELL, AT LEAST KARJLA'LL STOP SWINGING THAT *DEMON SWORD*, NOW..
"DEMON SWORD"..?
UH... ER... NOTHIN'. FORGET IT.
?! WHAT IS THAT *DREADFUL* COMMOTION?
HAW! JUST THE SAME OLD, SAME OLD

THEN GO SEE FOR YOURSELF! THEY'RE *OUTTA HERE*, ALL RIGHT!
A BUNCH OF BLOODY COWARDS IS WHAT THEY ARE! *DAMN IT ALL ANYWAY!!*

THOSE HEBLON SCUM JUST TURNED TAIL AND *SKEDADDLED* IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT!
I'M JUST BACK FROM THEIR CAMP-- NOT A MOTHER'S SON OF 'EM LEFT!
THE YALZU PEOPLE'S MILITIA, TOO! SO MUCH FOR THEIR "INVINCIBLE HEAVY CAVALRY," HUH?!! THE EMPIRE LIFTS ITS LITTLE FINGER AND THEY RUN BLUBBERING FOR THE HILLS!

THROW IN THE OTHER STINK.N' COWARDS, AND WE'RE DOWN TO FORTY PERCENT OF OUR PEAK STRENGTH!
DAMN! WE HAVEN'T EVEN CALLED THE UPRISING YET, AND JUST LOOK AT TH S MESS!

WELL, CHAIRMAN?!
HM?

IT'S ALL BECAUSE A' YOU PAPER-PUSHERS RUNNING AROUND LIKE CHICKENS W TH YER HEADS CUT OFF! IT'S CONTAGIOUS!
YOL GUYS MADE IT LOOK LIKE WE WAS ALL PEEING IN OUR PANTS!

THE END RESULT IS THAT THOSE WHO REMAIN ARE ALL THE MORE COURAGEOUS.
!?

WHOA! HEY! WHO'S THAT?! WHO'S THE BABE?!
HELL IF I KNOW, BAZZ.
DAMN T, DARD!
KNOCK UP YOUR OLD LADY, AND *WHAM*, YER ALREADY MESSING WITH ANOTHER BROAD!
WHY YOU... I OUGHTTA ...!
CALM DOWN, IDIOT. YA GOT IT ALL WRONG.
I GOT IT WRONG?! THEN WHO THE HELL IS *THAT?!*
I'M TELL N' YA...
YOU MUST BE CHA RMAN *ARRAS.*
AAH... Y-YES. YES, INDEED!

I AM *ROSALIA OLZEN.*

MY YOUNGER SISTER *KARULA OLZEN* IS FEELING UNWELL. I COME HERE AS HER REPRESENTATIVE.

IS THIS ACCEPT-ABLE?

KRASH!

R-ROSALIA... *ROSALIA OLZEN?!* NOT ROSALIA, QUEEN OF LEDOMIAM ...?!

ALL GRIFFELL HAS HEARD HOW YOU SAVED YOUR AILING FATHER KING OLZEN FROM THE EMPIRE, AND HOW SPLENDIDLY YOU LED LEDOMIAM IN THAT DESPERATE WAR!

BRILLIANT LEGEND PRECEDES YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS!

OH, NO... YOU ARE TOO KIND.

AAH, TO IMAGINE THAT SUCH AN EXALTED LEADER SHOULD DEIGN TO JOIN OUR COUNCIL... !

I, ARRAS OF AKOGILAND, AM AT YOUR COMMAND...

SHAK

AH, UH, UH... I'M BAZZ! BORN IN RADOM!
I, ER... I GOT T'KNOW YOUR SISTER AT THE BATTLE OF RADOM!
OH, YOU'RE BAZZ...? MY SISTER TELLS ME YOU'VE BEEN SUCH A STRENGTH TO HER! THANK YOU!
B-BEGGIN' YER PARDON, MA'AM, BUT I AIN'T NOTHIN' SPECIAL! IN FACT, SHE HAULED MY SORRY ASS OUTTA TH--
ROLL YER TONGUE BACK INTO YER MOUTH AND ZIP IT, YA LUMMOX!
EXCUSE ME, GENTLEMEN. MAY I TROUBLE YOU WITH MY THOUGHTS IN THIS MATTER?
I BELIEVE THAT CHAIRMAN ARRAS EXAGGERATED THE IMPERIAL THREAT FOR A GOOD REASON.
I BELIEVE HE WAS SELECTING OUT THE VERY BEST WARRIORS.
TRUE HEROES WHO WILL NOT FLINCH BEFORE THE ONSLAUGHT OF THE IMPERIAL FLEET.
YOU CANNOT HOPE TO DEFEAT THE EMPIRE BY NUMBERS ALONE.
YOU MEN GATHERED HERE TODAY WERE CHOSEN BY THE CHAIRMAN FOR YOUR STERLING QUALITIES.
....?
YOU GOT IT!

OKAY, LESSEE . THE EMPIRE'S DEFENSES ARE TH N ON THE LEFT FLANK.
FIRST FLEET GOES R GHT DOWN THE MIDDLE AS PLANNED. ONCE YOU BREAK THROUGH, FAN OUT TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT.
SECOND FLEET AND THIRD FLEET SUPPORT THE MAIN AXIS OF ATTACK.
GOT IT! A MAP OF THE CAPITAL'S SEWERS AND SERVICE TUNNELS!
MAINOHTA AND THE IRON DUKE'LL HARRASS AND DELAY THEIR MA N BATTLE GROUP
THE RAJENDORA'S GOT A THICK SKIN. SHE CAN SOAK UP THE PUNISHMENT AND SLUG IT OUT TOE-TO-TOE.
HEH... CHECK IT OUT!
YOU'VE CRACKED THEIR CODES WIDE OPEN?! AWESOME, DUDE!
ONCE YOU'VE MADE YOUR RUN, BANK RIGHT AND PULL UP HARD.
DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE THE R TRIPLE-A!
AH, SUCH V RGINAL BEAUTY! AND HER DAZZ NG SMILE LIKE A VERY GODDESS!
BAZZ, YOU LEAD THE LEFT W NG... HEY?! ARE YA LISTENING TO ME?!

WELL, NO DOUBT... YOU SAVED THE DAY.
TRULY YOU DESERVE YOUR REPUTATION, YOUR HIGHNESS. YOU PULLED THAT CROWD OF BRUISERS INTO A TEAM JUST LIKE *THAT.*
ARRAS HAS LEARNED MUCH THIS DAY.
DON'T BE TOO MODEST. AFTER ALL, YOU PUT ALL THE PIECES IN PLACE, CHAIRMAN.
FRANKLY, I'M OF A MIND TO LEAVE AKOGILAND IN YOUR COMPETENT HANDS. WELL? HOW ABOUT IT, MY LADY?
EH?!
YOU JEST... AKOGILAND ALREADY HAS A LEADER, NO? IT HAS *YOU,* CHAIRMAN!
NO, NO NO... IF THIS WAS STILL JUST A FREE TRADE CITY, I MIGHT BE GOOD ENOUGH.
BUT AKOGILAND HAS BECOME A *CITY STATE,* MILITARIZED AND SWOLLEN WITH NEW CITIZENS.

WITHOUT THE LEADERSHIP OF A CONSUMMATE AND *PROFESSIONAL* POLITICIAN, IT COULD ALL COME TUMBLING DOWN.

NO I *INSIST*, LADY ROSALIA!

BUT...

AKOGLAND IS NOT TO YOUR TASTE, PERHAPS ...?

OH, *NO!!* NOT AT ALL! THIS IS A *WONDERFUL* PLACE, SO VITAL AND FREE!

AND I AM TRULY GRATEFUL THAT YOU HOLD ME IN SUCH HIGH REGARD.

HOWEVER...

...IF I, THE FORMER QUEEN OF LEDOMIAM, BECAME LEADER OF THIS SEAT OF REBELLION, THEN WHAT WOULD BECOME OF MY PEOPLE?

THEY ARE ALREADY SUFFERING UNDER THE JACKBOOT OF IMPERIAL OCCUPATION.

..
....

I SEE. YES, THERE'S NOTHING THE EMPIRE WOULDN'T STOOP TO...

IF THAT'S THE SITUATION, THEN I TOO HAVE NO CHOICE.

PLEASE FORGIVE ME!

BUT DON'T THINK I WON'T HELP! INDEED, I'LL DO *ANYTHING* WITHIN MY POWER!

AND NOW, MY LADY-- A WARNING.
PARDON?
WELL, THIS IS STILL ONLY RUMOR, UNDER-STAND...
...BUT WE HEAR THAT EMPEROR KURGH HAS ISSUED PRIORITY ORDERS: "DO ANYTHING--MOVE HEAVEN AND EARTH-- TO CAPTURE THE OLZEN SISTERS ALIVE."

WHAT ?!?

THAT SLIMY WORM KURGH SAYS HE'S GONNA MARRY LADY ROSALIA?!
WHOA! CALM DOWN, BAZZ! IT'S STILL JUST A RUMOR--
YOU GOTTA BE JOKING!
"CALM DOWN"...? HOW THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO CALM DOWN?! THAT SICK, TWISTED LITTLE GRUB!! I'LL--
LISTEN! THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.

AS KJRGH SEES IT, HE'S NOT GOING TO WANT HIS BRIDE HURT OR DAMAGED IN ANY WAY

IN OTHER WORDS, BEFORE THE REAL FIGHTING STARTS, HE MAY TRY TO STEAL HER BACK.

HMM. YEAH, MAKES SENSE.

SO. . DOES HE KNOW THE QUEEN .S HERE?

WHEN THE EMPEROR COMMANDS, HIS TROOPS MUST SUCCEED OR DIE.

WE HAVE TO ASSUME..

UNFORTUNATELY, LADY ROSALIA DOESN'T SEEM WORRIED. SHE SAYS SHE'S SAFE SURROUNDED BY ALL THESE BRAVE WARRIORS, WITH HER SISTER AT HER SIDE...

THAT'S JUST PLAIN *DUMB!* OBVIOUSLY SHE--

SO, AS I WAS SAYING... IN ANY CASE, WE NEED TO ROUND UP THE BEST FIGHTERS WE HAVE TO PROTECT HER.

YOU GOT IT, BOSS!! THAT'S *MY* JOB! LEAVE IT TO BAZZ!

I WON'T LET THAT CRAWLIN' BUG MAN LAY A CLAW ON HER!

DAMN IT!! WHO THE HELL DO THEY THINK THEY ARE, ANYWAY?
WHD WHD
DARD AND S S... BOTH OF THEM!
SURE I GOTTA TAKE CARE OF THE KID I'M CARRYING!
BJT IT'S NOT LIKE I GET INTO FIGHTS ALL THE TIME, EVERY DAY!
IS THIS ANY WAY TO TREAT YOUR "DEAR LITTLE SISTER" ...?!
CLANK
HNNRRGH!!
YOU'D THINK THEY DIDN'T TRUST ME!
JM... IF YOU DON'T MIND ME ASKING, MA'AM..
KRNCH

WHAT THE HELL DOES IT LOOK LIKE?! THEY SHACKLED ME DOWN TO PLAY "GOOD LITTLE HOUSE-WIFE"...!

POUNDING RICE PASTE ..?

YEAH, WELL... I GOTTA EXERCISE, TOO, YOU KNOW.

OH, I GET IT! WE GOT A HIGHER-RANKING ROYAL BABE HERE, NOW...

...SO *YOU'RE* BACK ON MANUAL LABOR!

OH, *REALLY?!* MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD SOME *SPICE* TO MY *RICE!*

*AIEE!* I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY!!

♪ TA TA TUM DUM-DE-DUM... ♪ RUM TUM TIDDLY TUM-TUM! ♪

AAH, WHO WOULD HAVE DREAMED ONE DAY I'D BE MAINTAINING A *SUPER ACE'S* FIGHTER?!

OH, SUCH JOY! LIFE JUST DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER!

NOBLE WARRIORS! NOW IS THE TIME TO SACRIFICE OUR-SELVES FOR THE MOTHERLAND'S TRIUMPHANT LIBERATION...

...AND TRANSFORM OUR HEROIC BODIES INTO *BULLETS OF BLOOD!!*

HUH ...?

WOULD YOU LISTEN TO THAT CRAP?! BUNCHA LOUD-MOUTHS!
THAP
TH AP
WHAT KINDA IDIOTS TALK ABOUT A "MOTHER-LAND" ANYMORE?!
WHUPS!
YEEP--
YANK
HMM?!
OF ALL THE IMPERTI-NENCE!
SKSH
AAA!!

W-WAIT A SECOND! THIS IS A...

FWHOOSH

HA,EE

...A NOSJIR KAMIKAZE MISSILE!!

KGHAK

AH, EXCELLENT! ANOTHER STALWART VOLUNTEER FOR THE SPECIAL ATTACK FORCE, EH?!

ACK! NO! NO! I'M JUST, ER...

NOW, NOW, LAD! COME TREAD IN THE FOOT-STEPS OF THE NOSJIR GOD WARRIOR MASAHIKO!

EH ...?

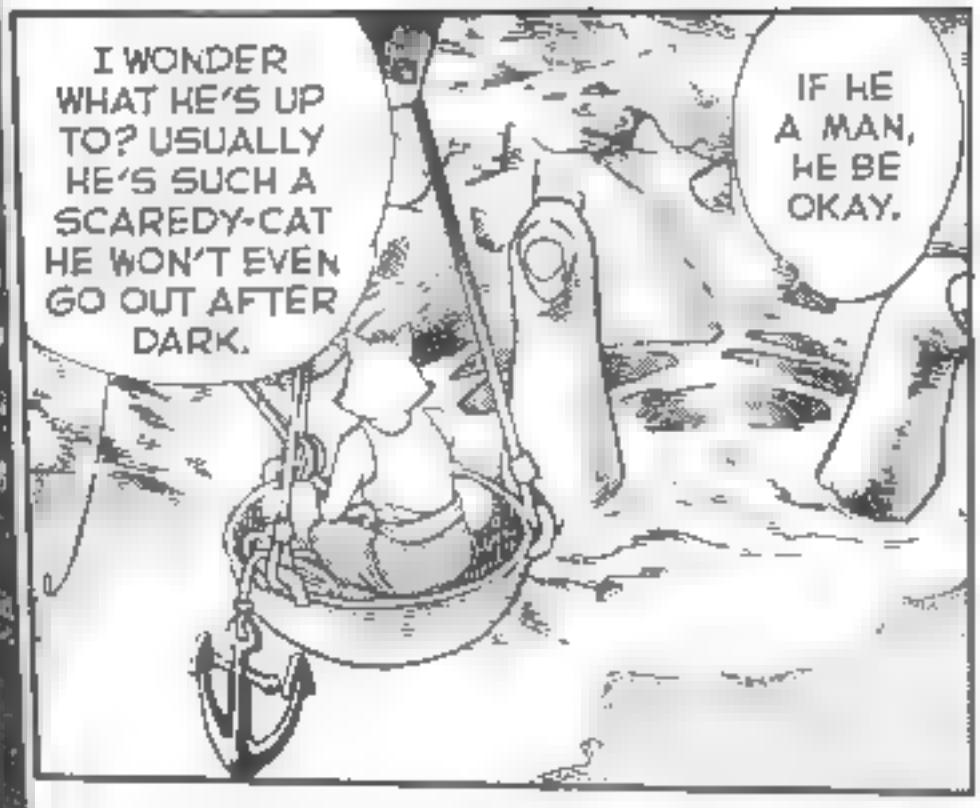
HUH?!

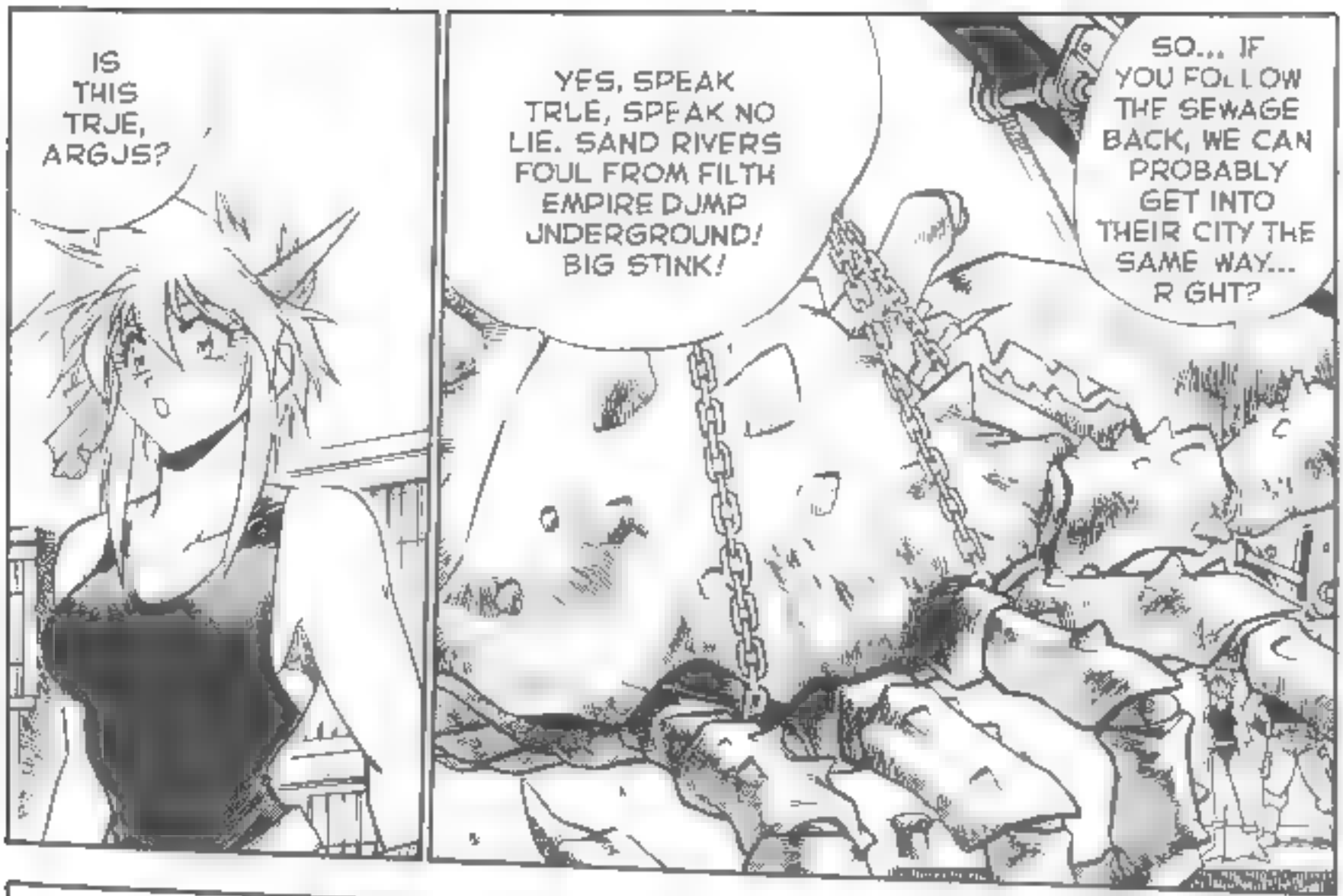
"GOD WARRIOR.. MASAHIKO"?!

INDEED! THE SELFLESS HERO WHO MAGNIFICENTLY AND SINGLE HANDEDLY PULVERIZED THE TREACHEROUS BOHTON, HEINOUS BOSVANIAN RUNNING DOG OF IMPERIAL AGGRESSION!

MISCREANT! HAVE YOU NEVER PRAYED BEFORE HIS STATUE IN THE CAPITAL?!

I DUNNO ABOUT MASAHIKO... THE LITTLE DWEEB DIDN'T COME BACK LAST NIGHT, EITHER.




IS THIS TRUE, ARGUS?
YES, SPEAK TRUE, SPEAK NO LIE. SAND RIVERS FOUL FROM FILTH EMPIRE DUMP UNDERGROUND! BIG STINK!
SO... IF YOU FOLLOW THE SEWAGE BACK, WE CAN PROBABLY GET INTO THEIR CITY THE SAME WAY... RIGHT?

WELL, DARD? WE CAN USE THIS, DON'T YOU THINK?
DAMN STRAIGHT. AKOG LAND HITS 'EM FROM THE OUTSIDE, AND WE STRIKE FROM BELOW.

YOU SANDCRABS CAN SWIM UP THESE SAND RIVERS, RIGHT?!
AYE... ARGUS GO, BRING MANY FRIEND!
THANK YOU!

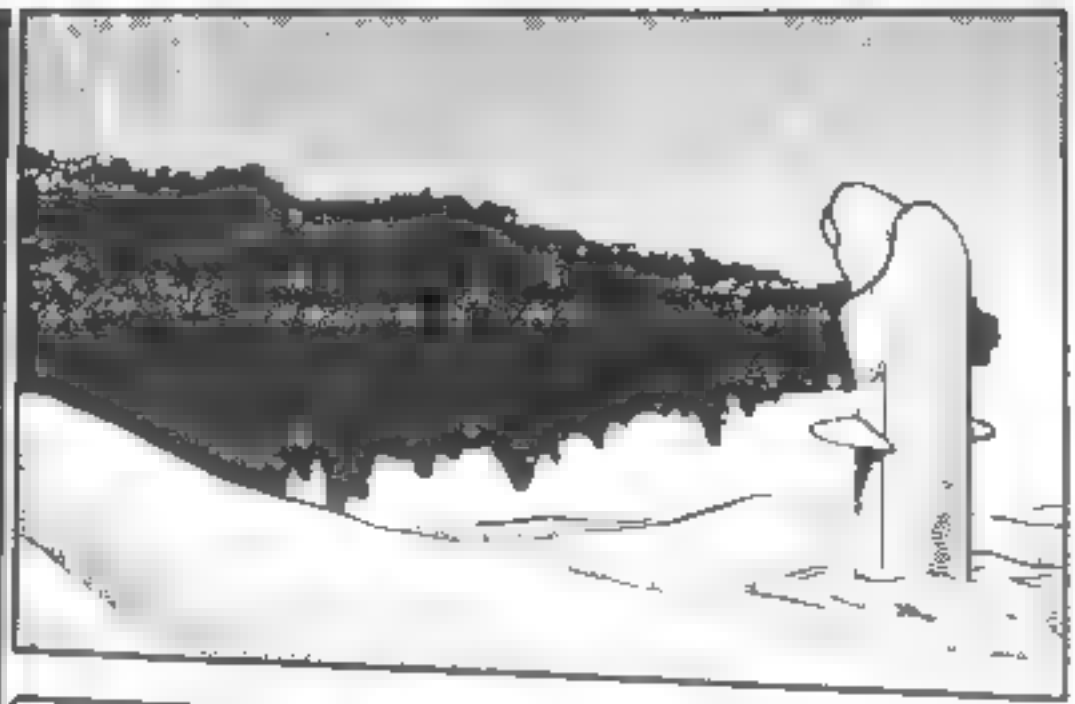
JUST WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!

HOW DARE YOU DISGUSTING HAIRY BRUTES BARGE INTO MY MISTRESS' CHAMBER?!
CHILL, TOOTS! WE IS HERE TO PROTECT LADY ROSALIA, SEE?!

NO WAY! I PROTECT MISTRESS ROSALIA, UNDERSTAND?!
SO GET OUT!
YA DUMB BROAD! WHAT CAN A WIMPY LITTLE THING LIKE YOU DO?!

NOW, NOW, BOTH OF YOU! ENOUGH!
LOOK, RIJA, IT'S JUST A PRECAUTION, OKAY? I'LL HAVE THEM GUARD OUTSIDE THE TENT.
JUST RELAX. THESE ARE TRUST-WORTHY MEN.
HAH! I JUST BET!!

THE ONLY REASON A MAN EVER HELPS A WOMAN IS WHEN HE'S GOT THE HOTS FOR HER!
DOUBLE HAH! LOOK WHO'S TALKING, YA OVERSEXED LITTLE SAND-WORM!



PREPARE FOR SURFACE ATTACK- LOAD VERTICAL LAUNCH TUBES
WHEN THE TIME COMES WE'LL PUMP TWO OR THREE ROUNDS INTO THEM, AND RECOVER THE INSERTION TEAM IN THE CONFUSION
YES, SIR!

BAZZ ...?
!

THANK YOU FOR LOOKING OUT FOR US.

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME HOT TEA?

AH, AH, GOSH, Y-YA SHOULDN'T' DON'T WORRY 'BOUT ME! I'M... AH.. *ON DUTY, MA'AM!*

NOW, NOW, DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, BAZZ... I KNOW YOU'RE COLD AND TIRED.

COME ON-- HERE

I *ACCEPT,* MY FAIR LADY!!

OH! G... GOOD.

MM... YOU REALLY *ARE* A WARRIOR. SUCH BIG, POWERFUL HANDS...

AW, HELL, MA'AM! I'M SORRY!

TO THINK I'M BEING PROTECTED BY *SUCH* A BRAVE WARRIOR! NOW I CAN SLEEP IN PEACE...

NOW, PLEASE-- BEFORE IT GETS COLD.

Y-Y- YES, MA'AM!!

TH-*THANK YOU!* IT WAS S-S- *SUPERB!*

GOOD! I'M COUNTING ON YOU, BAZZ!

. . . . . .

!!

*GET BACK TO YOUR POSTS,* YA LOUSY GOOD-FER-NOTHING *PEEPING TOMS!!*

AND TIGHTEN THE WATCH! IF SO MUCH AS A *BABY ANT* GETS THROUGH, I'LL SKIN YOU ALL *ALIVE!*

WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?
LUNATICS ...!

KARULA, THOSE GUARDS...
YEAH, I HEARD ABOUT IT, TOO. KURGH'S GUNNING FOR ME AND YOU, RIGHT?
HMPH! DO THEY REALLY THINK SOME LOUSY IMPERIAL AGENT CAN CATCH ME NAPPING?!

SEND ME YOUR BEST! SEND A MILLION OF 'EM!
I'LL SLICE 'EM AND DICE 'EM!
SWHIST

STOP ACTING LIKE AN IDIOT, KARULA! YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR PRECIOUS LITTLE BABY, AND THAT'S ALL!
THIS IS GETTING OLD...

YOU LISTEN TO ME! THAT CHILD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING NOW!
YES, YES, DEAR SISTER. POINT TAKEN.

HMM. QUITE THE GUARD THEY'VE PUT UP.
YES. BUT OF COURSE, TO US SUCH THINGS ARE MEANING-LESS.

THEN SHALL WE GO IN AND PICK UP THE LADIES...?
WAIT!

WHAT IS THIS I SENSE ..?

SHINGG

HAH! I DON'T CARE WHO COMES FOR US-- THEYRE DEAD MEAT!
AS LONG AS I'VE GOT MY SWORD...
MMM... I COULD JUST DROWN IN YOUR BEAUTIFUL SHEEN!
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I SEE YOU..

IT'S A DEMON SWORD-- POWER RATING OFF THE SCALE.
COULD IT BE THE SWORD THE EMPEROR USED TO CONTROL KARULA? THE ONE THAT FELLED GUSTAV?
A DEMON SWORD NEVER CHANGES MASTERS... IT LIVES AND DIES AS PART OF ITS OWNER, BOUND BY A WEB OF POWER.

REMEMBER THAT WHEN YOU TAKE THEM!

UMM ..?

MISTRESS ROSALIA... DEAR?

RJA! RJA, STOP THAT!

OH, LATELY MY MISTRESS IS SO COLD...

BE REASONABLE, RUA! MY LITTLE SISTER'S HERE AND...

...WELL, WE'VE SO LITTLE PRIVACY...

SO? SO?!

WHY ARE YOU SO ASHAMED OF OUR RELATIONSHIP?! WHY CAN'T TWO WOMEN SHARE THEIR LOVE?!

YOU'RE RIGHT, MY DEAR. LET'S GO TO BED.

BESIDES I'LL NEVER GET A WINK OF SLEEP OTHERWISE

YAHOO!

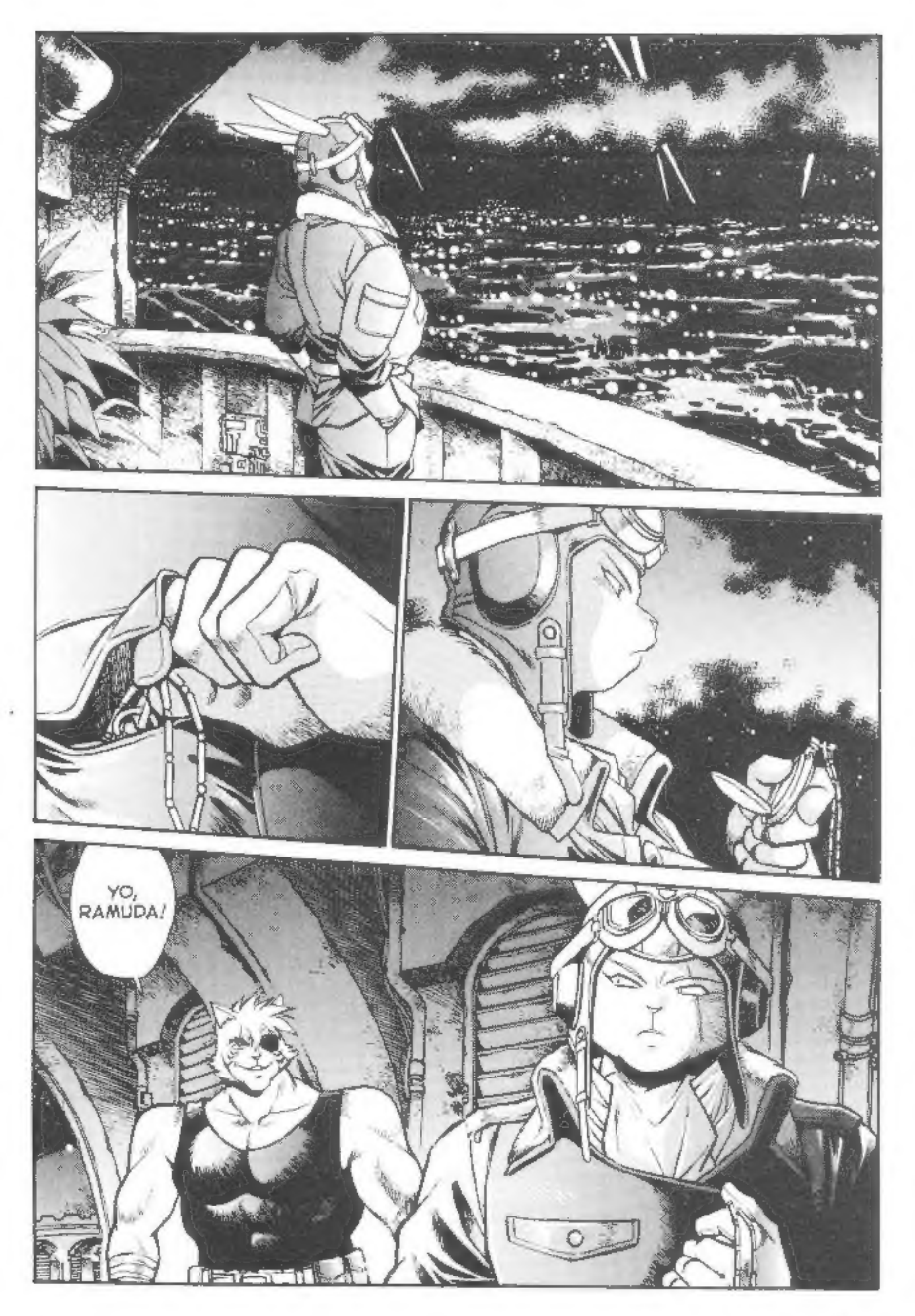
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO PROMISE THAT YOU'LL GO RIGHT TO SLEEP WHEN WE'RE DONE!

OH, MISTRESS! I LOVE YOU!

MNPH!

SMOOCH

GNNNNNN
NO WORK SINCE WE'S GOT HERE. OH, LORDY...
AH'M SO HUNGRY...
OH, ROSALIA BABY, SEND US ANOTHER SUGAR MOMMA LIKE YOU...

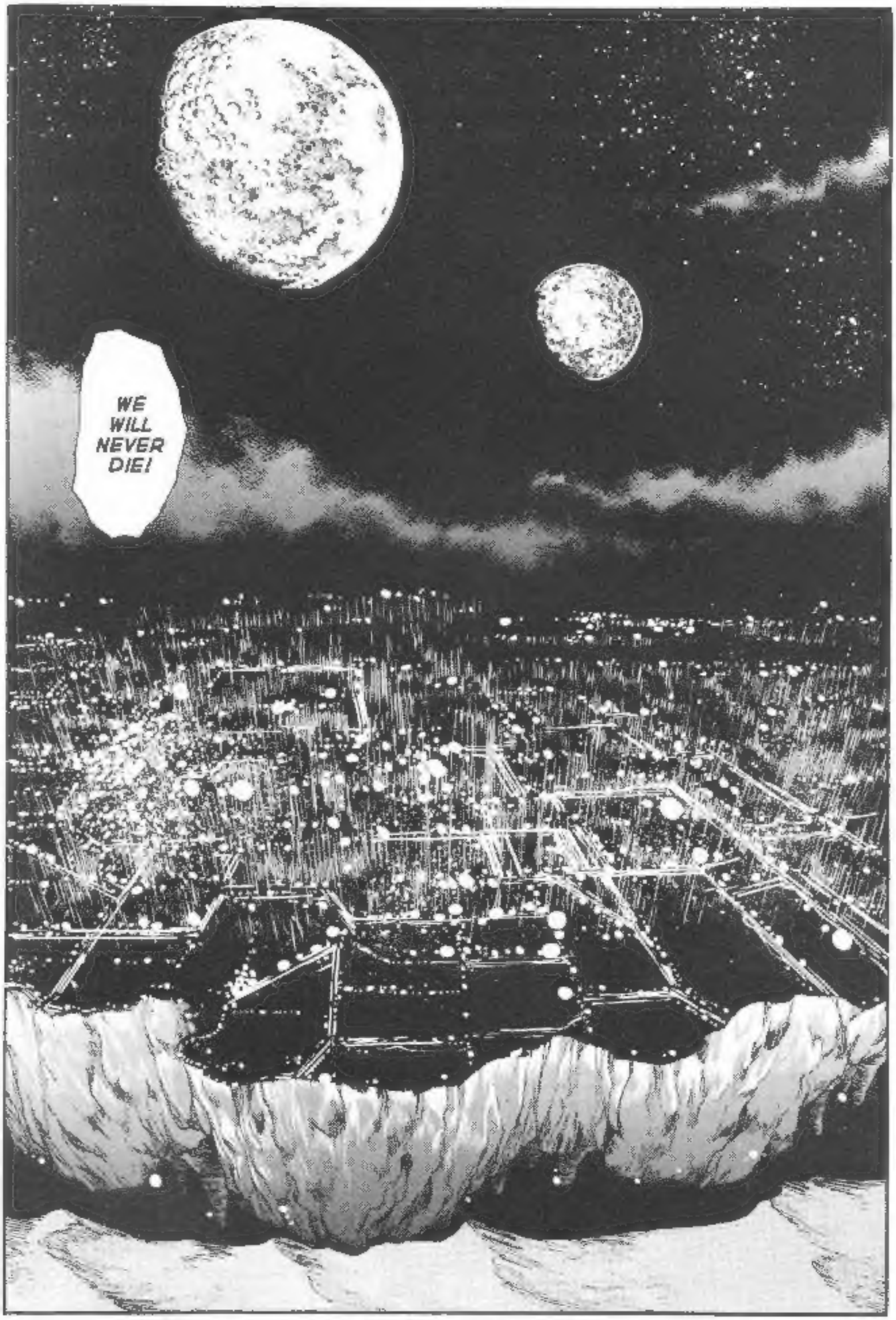

YO, RAMUDA!

I HEAR YOU'RE GOING TO BE A FATHER.
CONGRATULATIONS.

YEAH... GOT ME ANOTHER "BABE" TO PROTECT, NOW. WHAT A PAIN, HUH?
HA HA HA!

GUESS NEITHER OF US CAN AFFORD TO DIE ANYMORE, EH?!

YES... YES, INDEED!
WE WILL NOT DIE, MY FRIEND!




TO BE CONCLUDED IN *DRAKUUN: FLAMES OF EMPIRE!*